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FRANKLIN'S BOOK SHOP, 1745

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AMERICAN EDUCATION AND LITERATURE

PART 1: THE AMERICAN SPIRIT IN
EDUCATION

BY EDWIN E. SLOSSON

PART 2: THE AMERICAN SPIRIT IN
LITERATURE

BY BLISS PERRY



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PART I
THE AMERICAN SPIRIT IN
EDUCATION

A CHRONICLE
OF GREAT TEACHERS

BY
EDWIN E. SLOSSON

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THE AMERICAN SPIRIT IN EDUCATION

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CHAPTER I

SCHOOL DAYS IN EARLY NEW ENGLAND

It being one chiefe project of that ould deluder Sathan to keepe men from the knowledge of the Scriptures . . . It is therefore ordered that every township in this jurisdiction, after the Lord hath increased them to the number of 50 householders, shall appoint one within their towns to teach all such children as shall resort to him to write and reade. — *Massachusetts School Law, 1647.*

THE origin of the American public school must be sought in New England, not because the schools of Massachusetts were the first in time — for Virginia, if not New Netherland, may dispute that primacy — but because New England has been the teacher of the nation's teachers. The legislators who framed the early school laws for the newer States of the South and the West found models in the codes of Massachusetts and Connecticut;

and to a remarkable extent the first text-books used in every State and Territory of the Union came from New England publishers. Harvard and Yale and even the smallest colleges of New England have attracted students not only from all parts of America but from all quarters of the globe. Scholars, teachers, divines, and college graduates by the thousand have been numbered among the sons of New England who joined the great tide of migration from the Atlantic seaboard to the frontier. Whether the western limit of American settlement was in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, Kansas, or Colorado, the schoolmaster and the schoolma'am from "down East" were there as true volunteers on the firing-line of civilization to see that the younger generation was not permitted to grow up without the knowledge considered essential in that day.

Though the educational leadership of America is now held by no one section, the pioneer work of the men and women of New England can never lose its historical importance. In the story of the New England school may be read in brief the story of public education in America. A description of district school, academy, or college in New England may stand with very little change for thousands of similar institutions throughout the country.

Of the early settlers in America the colonists of Plymouth were second to none in their zeal for the education of their children, but their poverty and the arduous task of turning a wilderness into a commonwealth inevitably postponed for several years the establishment of schools. Children were at first commonly taught at home until the colonists found themselves in a position to set up both elementary and grammar schools. There was no adequate public provision for instruction until 1670, when the General Court of the colony enacted a law "granting all such profits as may or shall accrue annually to the colony from fishing with nets or seines at Cape Cod for mackerel, bass, or herring, to be improved for and towards a free school in some town in this jurisdiction, for the training up of youth in literature for the good and benefit of posterity." The town of Plymouth promptly accepted this opportunity and built a schoolhouse which served also as a home for the teacher. Within a few years of the establishment of a system of public instruction in Plymouth the colony was merged with Massachusetts and became subject to the laws of the larger colony.

Massachusetts Bay, although a later settlement than Plymouth, was the first New England colony to

make its schools a public charge. Compared with the scanty numbers and resources of the men of Plymouth, the colony of Massachusetts seemed from the beginning strong and prosperous. Among its first settlers were men of some wealth and much learning. Such men were quick to see the need of teachers for their children and were equally prompt to supply it. In 1635 a town meeting in Boston voted to hire a schoolmaster and thus founded the Boston Latin School, which has brought an honorable record down to our own day. This institution was supported largely by the generosity of the wealthier citizens, but a few years later a school was established at Dorchester and maintained entirely by a public tax. Other Latin schools were soon built in the more progressive townships, and in 1642 an ordinance of the colony made education compulsory.

The law of 1642 called to public attention the failure of many parents and guardians to train the children in their charge in learning and labor. It gave the town authorities the power to punish by fines those who refused to give an account of the instruction received by their children, "especially of their ability to read and understand the principles of religion and the capital laws of this country." In case a child's education were persistently

neglected, the officials of the town had the right to apprentice him in some fit occupation where his improvement would be better looked after. If this ambitious ordinance could have been enforced to the letter, Massachusetts would never have had a boy or girl within her borders who could not read and write, pursue a useful trade, and pass an examination in civics. But it was one thing to require instruction and another to provide it. Not every parent could furnish the means for private teaching, and not all the towns were equally forward in establishing free schools.

To remedy the lack of adequate facilities for learning, the colony in 1647 made it obligatory on every township of fifty householders to employ some one competent to teach reading and writing. Every township of a hundred families was compelled in addition to establish a grammar school capable of preparing boys for college. The schools thus established were not necessarily free, since fees were sometimes charged, nor were children compelled to attend if their parents preferred to give them private instruction. But three main principles were established by this early law which have characterized American education ever since: that the duty of public instruction is one which no

community, however small and poor, may be permitted to evade; that the government of the public schools in matters of detail is lodged not in some distant central authority but in the immediate neighborhood where the schools are situated; and that the elementary schools are distinct from the secondary schools which prepare for college or university.

Such promising beginnings, however, did not lead to rapid and continuous progress. Some towns found it cheaper to pay the fines imposed upon them for neglect of the law than to hire a schoolmaster and openly disregarded the ordinance of 1647. Many of the later immigrants to Massachusetts had less of that zeal for learning which distinguished the first settlers; and, being busy practical men engaged in trade or agriculture, they did not see the need of Latin for their children. Apart from these discouragements within, Indian raids on the backwoods settlements proved to be another obstacle to learning, the strength of which can readily be appreciated from the following pathetic petition from Dover, New Hampshire¹:

That whereas the said town is one of the most exposed towns in this Province to the insults of the Indian enemy, and also whereas by an act of the General As-

¹ Walter H. Small, *Early New England Schools* (1914), p. 51.

sembly of this Province the said town of Dover (amongst others) is obliged by said act to keep and maintain a grammar school, and whereas the circumstances and situation or settlements of the inhabitants of said town lying and being in such a manner as it is, the houses being so scattered over the whole township that in no one place six houses are within call, by which inconveniency the inhabitants of said town can have no benefit of such grammar school, for at the times fit for children to go and come from school, is generally the chief time of the Indians doing mischief, so that the inhabitants are afraid to send their children to school, and the children dare not venture; so that the salary to said schoolmaster is wholly lost to said town.

Within a few years of the first settlements, all the New England colonies except Rhode Island made public provision for education. Newport and Providence gave generous donations of land for the establishment of town schools, but in Rhode Island before 1800 there was no general law authorizing towns to maintain public schools. The backwardness of the little colony in matters of education was due largely to the fact that, since there was no union between Church and State, the Government was not concerned, as it was in Massachusetts, to sustain an educated ministry. Education was regarded in Rhode Island, just as it was in England and in most of the English colonies outside the

region of Puritan influence, as a need to be met by private initiative. New Hampshire followed the school system of Massachusetts, and Maine, as a part of Massachusetts throughout the colonial period, shared the same laws. In her Constitution of 1777 Vermont enjoined upon the Legislature the duty of establishing a school or schools in each town "for the convenient instruction of the youth."

Connecticut has an educational record rivaling that of Massachusetts. Schools were well established in Hartford before the middle of the seventeenth century, and soon schools were made compulsory throughout the entire colony. The selectmen of each town were required to see that none "shall suffer so much barbarism in any of their families, as not to endeavor to teach by themselves or others their children and apprentices so much learning as may enable them perfectly to read the English tongue, and knowledge of the capital laws." Towns of fifty householders were obliged to maintain teachers of reading and writing, and towns of a hundred householders were required to establish a grammar school. New Haven colony, before it was united with the towns on the Connecticut, enacted similar laws. In 1672 six hundred acres of land were assigned to

each county in Connecticut to endow a grammar school in the "county town."

The common schools which taught pupils to read and write English early supplanted the "dame schools" and other private schools for primary instruction, and they were, on the whole, well kept up in all the English colonies where they had been established by public authority. But the Latin grammar schools were essentially exotic. In all features except their public support they were intended to resemble the secondary schools of England and as a result were strikingly ill adapted to frontier conditions. The general tendency of the rural townships to neglect the school laws affected the grammar schools much more adversely than the elementary schools. In many places only three or four youths cared to study Latin or prepare for college, and the taxpayers were consequently indignant at having to support a schoolmaster of so little value to the community. Although the grammar schools were not supposed to admit boys who could not already read and write English, public opinion often compelled the teacher to take pupils at a very early age and coach them for grammar school work by giving them the necessary elementary instruction.

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The grammar schools prospered most in Massachusetts, especially in the towns within a convenient distance of Harvard College. But even in Massachusetts this type of school was ultimately replaced by the private academy or preparatory school. Today in the system of public education the public high school serves as the connecting link between the elementary school and the university and thus occupies a place similar to that of the old Latin grammar school; but the old rigid classical course of study and the old paternal oversight of the pupils is now found only in certain private boarding schools.

The Latin schools in their day gave very thorough instruction in the limited field of classical learning. Boys were drilled for several hours a day in the complexities of Latin grammar and were encouraged, and frequently compelled, to speak Latin instead of English in the classroom. Sometimes the master was a scholar of distinguished attainments, a graduate of Harvard College or even of one of the English universities. Nothing is more surprising in the records of colonial times than the amount of conscientious, laborious, professional service which a New England town could thus receive in exchange for a few pounds a year

and the right to pasture a cow and live in a dilapidated schoolhouse. Of course the Puritan schoolmaster found a certain compensation for his meager salary in the social prestige accorded to his profession and frequently enhanced in New England by its association with religion. Many teachers were also ministers, and all, whether clergy or laymen, were required to be "sound in the faith" and "of sober and good conversation."

The fame of the more successful teachers of colonial times has come down to the present day. The Boston Latin School was fortunate enough to have as its head for thirty-eight years the famous Ezekiel Cheever, the friend and instructor of Cotton Mather, who said of him after his death at the age of ninety-four: "He had been a skilful, painful, faithful schoolmaster for seventy years, and had the singular favor of heaven, that though he had usefully spent his life among children, yet he was not twice become a child, but held his abilities, in an unusual degree, to the very last." As principal of the Boston Latin School he received "sixtie pounds p. an. for his service in the schoole out of the towne rates, and rents that belong to the schoole and the possession and use of ye schoole house." He was the author of a text-book of

elementary Latin which came into general use in the colonies and was the first important school book published in America. Elijah Corlett made a remarkable record as teacher at Cambridge. Here he taught both Indians and colonists, but his income from fees was so small that on several occasions the town authorities were compelled to come to his relief. Both these veteran teachers were celebrated by Cotton Mather in a couplet which shows that their work was at least appreciated even if it was almost unpaid:

'Tis Corlett's pains, & Cheever's, we must own,
That thou, *New England*, art not *Scythia* grown.

The school in Roxbury which, according to this same authority, eventually produced more scholars "than any town of its bigness, or, if I mistake not, of twice its bigness, in all New England," was established by the efforts of the Reverend John Eliot, the Apostle to the Indians.

The teachers of the elementary schools received in general even less for their labors than the schoolmasters of the grammar schools. Often they were paid in commodities other than the scarce coined money, and the form of payment varied with the products of the town. In the country districts

grain was the staple compensation; Maine teachers were often paid in lumber; Taunton at one time paid in pig iron; and the town of Hingham in pails. In some of the earliest contracts wampum, the Indian shell money, is mentioned. Yet these teachers who received their salaries in products having a market were more fortunate than a later generation forced to accept a depreciated paper currency at its face value. The nominal salary of the colonial teacher was increased by fees from parents, small grants of land for pasturing and gardening, exemption from taxation, and the right to board around among the families of the town. Lest the more penurious farmers begrudge the visiting teacher a good meal, the town sometimes paid a small sum to those who would agree to board him for a few weeks.

The curriculum of the common schools may be summed up in the four R's: Reading, 'Riting, 'Rithmetic, and Religion. Many of the earliest school contracts do not mention arithmetic at all, but the practical necessities of the settlers soon forced this subject into the course of study. Writing involved learning to cut and manipulate the quill pen. Pupils provided the quills and brought their ink from home, as its manufacture was one

of the many arts of the colonial household. Reading and religion were combined in the school text-book, and a knowledge of the catechism was a universal requirement.

The first and simplest of the school-books was the horn-book, an English invention consisting of a small board with a handle attached. To the board was fastened a sheet of paper covered with transparent horn to prevent the paper from becoming soiled or torn. Through this necessary protection the pupil could read the letters of the alphabet, certain combinations of letters, such as "ab eb ib," called the "syllabarium," the Lord's prayer, and at the bottom the Roman numerals. For more advanced children the chief text-book down to the end of the colonial period was the *New England Primer*, originally adapted from English models but changing considerably in the nature of its contents as it passed from edition to edition.

The *New England Primer* began, like the horn-book, with the alphabet and syllabarium. Then followed words for spelling, short sentences for reading, and a series of rimed couplets illustrated with very crude woodcuts for each letter of the alphabet, beginning with the theological assertion,

In Adam's fall
We finned all,

and closing with the scriptural statement,

Zaccheus he
Did Climb the Tree
Our Lord to see.

The religious flavor introduced thus early into colonial education was further strengthened by the inclusion of several prayers and hymns, the *Shorter Catechism*, and another catechism bearing the title *Spiritual Milk for American Babes drawn from the breasts of both Testaments for their soul's nourishment*. There was also a woodcut of John Rogers burning at the stake, with his wife and "nine small children and one at the breast" viewing the sad spectacle, to illustrate a poem written by that martyr to his children. The last feature of the *Primer* was an allegory of Youth yielding to the temptations of the Devil. This text-book was in use for a hundred and fifty years, and it is recorded that one firm of printers sold 37,000 copies within seven years. After the Revolution the *New England Primer* was gradually driven from the market by Webster's more modern schoolbooks.

The schoolhouse was almost always built of wood

and was likely to be in a ruinous condition. Sometimes it was only a log cabin with one room, in which the children were seated on long, unpainted benches, with nothing before them but bare walls and the teacher's desk. Usually the room was kept sufficiently heated only at the expense of ventilation. A schoolmaster writing in 1681 thus describes his schoolhouse: "The confused and shattered and nastie posture that it is in, the glass broke, and thereupon very raw and cold; the floor very much broken and torn up to kindle fires, the hearth spoiled, the seats some burned and others out of kilter, that one had well nigh as good keep school in a hog stie as in it."¹ The state of the schoolhouse, however, varied according to the liberality of the town. In some places the schools were kept in excellent repair, though in none of them was there any suggestion of the modern idea of making the schoolroom beautiful.

The schools were ungraded, although the little children just learning their letters usually sat apart from the rest. The pupils studied at their seats but, when called upon to recite, came to the front of the room, gave the teacher the book, and

¹ Clifton Johnson, *Old-Time Schools and School-Books* (1904), p. 9.

rehearsed their lesson as well as possible from memory. If the recitation fell very much below the master's expectations, the usual result was a sound flogging. The colonial school inherited the English tradition of harsh discipline and even exceeded its inheritance. Hot-tempered instructors were not content with the traditional use of the ruler, birch, and strap, but exercised their ingenuity in inventing new punishments. A disobedient or troublesome boy might be compelled to stand in the corner with a dunce's cap decorating his head, stay by the hot stove during recess, hold out a heavy book at arm's length until he was exhausted, have his nose pinched with a sort of wooden clothespin, or sit on the girls' side of the room — a punishment the severity of which depended upon the point of view. As a rule the more conscientious the teacher, the worse time his pupil had. There was no attempt to make study attractive, and most students followed the road to learning only under bitter compulsion.

Girls were almost never admitted to grammar school, although it was not at all uncommon for a teacher to give them private instruction after school hours. In the small common schools of rural New England necessity often triumphed over prejudice, and boys and girls had to be taught in

the same room and at the same time. The teacher, however, was very careful in such cases to seat the girls and boys on opposite sides of the room. In spite of the fact that the laws recognized the rights of girls to at least elementary instruction, less than forty per cent of the women whose names appear on recorded deeds in Massachusetts during the early part of the eighteenth century were able to write their own signatures, the rest having to attest by marks.¹

Dame schools filled a useful place in providing the first instruction of boys and sometimes the only instruction of girls. In these very elementary private schools taught by women in their own homes the little children learned to read from the horn-book and sometimes to do sums by making figures on the sanded floor. Girls who remained long enough in the dame school might learn to read, write, cipher, sew, recite the catechism, and even spell. Sewing in the dame schools and in more advanced private schools was taught very largely by the making of samplers. Some of these were simply copies of the horn-book with decorated borders and show that the sampler could teach reading, writing,

¹ G. H. Martin, *Evolution of the Massachusetts Public School System* (1894).

sewing, and piety in the same piece of work. The smallest children might be given the letters of the alphabet made in gingerbread and be permitted as a reward to eat the letters which they could recognize. Some dame schools taught nothing but the alphabet and were chiefly valued as safe places where a busy mother could leave her youngest children during part of the day. Although the dame schools were ordinarily supported by small fees from parents, in certain places the town paid something toward their upkeep as a cheaper alternative to establishing a common school.

As the frontier pushed farther westward, it became inconvenient for all the children in a spacious rural township to go long distances to a single school. The custom therefore grew up of moving the school, or rather the master, from one part of the township to another. The school would be taught several weeks in one place and then be moved on for the convenience of another group of children, sometimes staying in each part of the township for a length of time proportioned to what the neighborhood paid in taxes. In the latter part of the eighteenth century Connecticut and Massachusetts empowered the towns to divide themselves into smaller districts for the purpose of managing

the schools. The intention of the law was good, for its aim was to secure educational facilities for every part of each township, but it made the schools more than ever dependent upon small neighborhoods and resulted in mismanagement.

The law of 1789, which recognized in Massachusetts the district school system already established in fact by many of the towns, made other interesting changes in the school laws of the State. Towns of one hundred families were no longer compelled, as formerly, to maintain a grammar school. This requirement had, indeed, long been a dead letter, and the law recognized existing facts when it raised the limit to a hundred and fifty families for a part-time grammar school and required a full-time school only in towns of at least two hundred families. All teachers were required to have a college education or else present a certificate of learning and good character from a minister of the gospel "well skilled in the Greek and Latin language." Ministers and town officials were authorized to inspect schools every six months to see that they were properly conducted. Elementary schools were required to teach arithmetic, spelling, and "decent behavior," in addition to reading and writing English. This law marks the

definite triumph of experience over expectation: the common school system had firmly established itself and the grammar school, in which the founders of New England placed their greatest hope amid frontier conditions, had now all but perished.

CHAPTER II

SCHOOLS IN NEW NETHERLAND

You must urge upon the States-General that they should establish free schools, where children of quality, as well as of poor families, for a very small sum, could be well and Christianly educated and brought up. This would be the greatest and most useful work you could ever accomplish for God and Christianity, and for the Netherlands themselves. — *John of Nassau.*

WHEN the Dutch planted their colony in the valley of the Hudson, they were not constrained as were the Puritans of Massachusetts Bay to devise a system of public instruction but found in the institutions of their fatherland a ready model. Indeed, it is hardly too much to say that the Dutch colonists themselves did not establish schools but merely accepted those provided by the authorities. So slight was the effective control of the British Government over the New England commonwealths that they were virtually so many independent republics allied to England by sentiment and tradition. The colonists of New Netherland, on the

other hand, were governed autocratically by officials of the Dutch West India Company, whose charter of 1629 required the patroons and colonists to support a minister, a schoolmaster, and a "comforter of the sick." To maintain religion and learning every householder and inhabitant was subject to tax, but the West India Company furnished the schoolmasters and sometimes contributed to their support.

It would, however, be unjust to infer that the Dutch colonists were at all indifferent to the schools established in New Netherland. On the contrary, the records of the colony show how eager the settlers were to have schools built and kept supplied with competent teachers. The Dutchmen, many of them educated in the public schools of the Netherlands, would have considered it criminal to allow their children to go without similar advantages in their new home. But since most of the colonists were tradesmen seeking new commercial opportunities for themselves and their fellow-countrymen, the type of education in which they were most interested was a thorough grounding in the bread and butter subjects. Unlike the settlers of Massachusetts and Virginia, the Dutch colonists never founded a college and even had

to wait for some twenty years after elementary schools had been started before they had a Latin grammar school.

The city then called New Amsterdam was the first Dutch settlement to enjoy a public school. Adam Roelantsen, the first schoolmaster, opened school probably in 1633. It must be confessed that Roelantsen was far from being in all respects a credit to his profession. Little is known about his skill as a teacher, but it is a fact that he was constantly involved in lawsuits and frequently accused of slander and disorderly conduct. After Roelantsen abandoned his position, the school was continued somewhat irregularly by a number of other schoolmasters. For want of an adequate building the teachers were often forced to keep school in private houses or in public buildings intended for other purposes. The pay which the teacher received was frequently insufficient to maintain him. Sometimes the New Amsterdam school could find no one who would consent to undertake its charge, and the children were without schooling for months at a time, though a few struggling private schools shared with the public school the work of instructing the children of the city.

New Amsterdam was not the only Dutch colonial

town to support a public school. All of the other towns and villages of any importance in New Netherland established schools as soon as they were populous enough to warrant the expense. Even far-away New Amstel (now New Castle, Delaware) was supplied with a Dutch teacher, although at that time the majority of the townsmen were Swedes. Only in the country districts and in the poorer villages was public education not provided. In the outlying settlements the difficulty of obtaining good schoolhouses and good teachers was even greater than in New Amsterdam, and in spite of every effort on the part of their parents many children grew up without any regular schooling.

In 1652 a Latin school was started in what had earlier been the "city tavern" of New Amsterdam, but the experiment was very soon abandoned. The colonists thereupon petitioned the West India Company to send them some one competent to teach Latin and other advanced studies. In their appeal they pointed out that many of the citizens desired for their children the advantages of a Latin education, but that there was no place nearer than Boston where this want could be supplied. In 1659 the West India Company in response to their appeal sent the learned Dr. Alexander Curtius to

the colony as Latin schoolmaster. He received a moderate salary, a house and garden, fees from his pupils, and permission to practice medicine. Not succeeding very well with his charge, however, Dr. Curtius was soon replaced by the Reverend Ægidius Luyck. The Latin school was largely supported by the local authorities, although part of the teacher's salary was guaranteed by the Company.

The Dutch elementary schools in America taught little except reading, writing, arithmetic, and the catechism. Sometimes, as in the New England schools of the seventeenth century, even arithmetic was omitted from the course of study. But religious instruction was never neglected; in fact, after the English conquest many of the old Dutch public schools continued their existence as private parochial schools, still giving instruction in the Dutch language to the descendants of the first settlers. The change was the more easily made because even under the Dutch régime these schools had been in part supported by fees from well-to-do parents who had children in attendance. A typical teacher's contract, with one Evert Pietersen, assigned him a salary of 36 florins a month,¹ 125

¹ A florin is about forty cents in our coinage.

florins for board, free house, a school building, and free passage back to Holland at the conclusion of his service. Parents whose children were at school paid more or less according to whether the pupil studied reading, writing, and ciphering, or only reading and writing; but it was also stipulated that "the poor and needy, who ask to be taught for God's sake, he shall teach for nothing."¹ Most of the school-books were religious in character and, though arithmetics and primers were not unknown, the Bible, the catechism, and the psalm-book were the chief readers in use. Girls as well as boys went to the public school but sat apart from the boys or, if possible, were taught in another room.

Nowhere in America did the schoolmaster combine more offices in one than he did among the Dutch. The teacher was commonly both reader and precentor in the church; frequently he was also the sexton; sometimes he was the "comforter of the sick," a ministration which blended religion and medicine. Many of the school contracts specify in minutest detail the incidental duties of the schoolmaster even to the ringing of the church bell and the provision of water for the baptism of infants. If these auxiliary occupations may have

¹ Kilpatrick, *Dutch Schools of New Netherland*, p. 68.

detracted a little from the scholarly dignity of the teacher, they nevertheless enriched his purse with much needed fees and increased his usefulness in the eyes of the community. If long hours deserve a good salary, the Dutch schoolmaster was certainly not overpaid, for the school day began at eight in the morning and lasted, with a noon recess for lunch, till four in the afternoon. There was no long vacation during the year, unless, of course, the school was unable to find a teacher. There were, however, festival holidays, and Wednesday and Saturday afternoons were usually free.

Though the public school system of the Dutch colonists may have been imperfect and inadequate when judged by the standards of colonial Massachusetts, it was superior to anything that the newly established English Government was ready to put in its place. The English settlers practically ignored the Dutch establishment of public education and sent their own children to private schools or let them do without instruction — the custom not only in England itself but in the majority of the English colonies.

The people of New York, however, made a few attempts to obtain some measure of public support for the schools. In 1702 they passed a law

authorizing the public support of a school teacher in New York City to instruct "male children of such parents as are of French and Dutch extraction as well as of the English." This school lasted, it is true, for only seven years, but in 1732 the income from licenses issued to hawkers and peddlers was granted by the Government to a school for teaching Latin, Greek, and mathematics, and free scholarships were provided for twenty young men from different parts of the colony. But this school, also, had a brief existence.

More important than such slight and temporary aid of popular education was the part which the colonial Government played in the supervision of private schools, even though this oversight was more in the interest of religion than in the cause of efficient instruction. No teachers might come from England to teach in New York without the consent of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and no resident of New York might open a school without license from the Governor. These restrictions gave the Church of England a favored position of which it was not slow to take advantage. During the eighteenth century the instruction of the poor of New York came almost entirely under the care of an Anglican missionary association known as

the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.

The activities of this Society were by no means confined to New York but affected to some degree the educational life of all the colonies. In New England the strength of the Congregationalists left little room for Anglican missionary effort, and the completeness of the public school system discouraged the foundation of private charity schools; but in spite of these handicaps some Church of England schools were organized. In other parts of America the Society had better fortune, particularly in New York, where the rapidly increasing and cosmopolitan population and the lack of common schools offered a unique opportunity for educational effort.

But the establishment of schools was a secondary matter to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Its chief aim was evangelical; its main purpose, to convert the heathen Indians, to confirm in the faith the adherents of the Church of England, and to make headway against heresy and dissent. But, like the Jesuits of old and the modern missionaries to India or China, the missionaries of the S. P. G., as it is familiarly known, soon discovered that the only way to evangelize was to teach. In their

charity schools they emphasized the catechism and a thorough knowledge of the Anglican ritual, but they also found it advisable to teach the children "to write a plain and legible hand in order to the fitting them for useful Employments; with as much Arithmetick as shall be necessary to the same Purpose." The Society supported between five and ten schools in the colony of New York up to the time of the American Revolution and gave aid to many others. In New York City the Trinity Church charity school received help from the local authorities as well as from the Society and at one time held session in the City Hall.

The officers of the Society exercised great care in selecting their missionaries. All had to be sound in the faith and well-affected toward the existing Government, and married schoolmasters usually were required to take their wives with them to America. Teachers were expected to send home two reports a year of the progress of their work, but this duty they frequently neglected, as adequate supervision was impossible when the central organization was separated from its agents by the width of the Atlantic. The Society kept its schools supplied with generous donations of text-books, for the most part of a purely religious character. In

the early years of the eighteenth century the Society devoted no small share of its efforts to the instruction of the Iroquois Indians and the negro slaves, but, as the colony became more populous and settled, it shifted the emphasis more and more from purely missionary activities to ordinary school work. After an insurrection of the slaves in 1712 had been unjustly ascribed to the educational work of the Society, the colonists looked with some disfavor on the teaching of negroes, but the Society did not entirely abandon its work.

The English made, on the whole, a creditable educational record in New York. As a result of private initiative and philanthropic effort, free elementary education was provided for many children, some good secondary schools were established, and a flourishing college was founded. But the cardinal mistake of the English in not establishing a public school system had baneful effects that outlasted the colonial period. Free education became synonymous with charity education, and the schooling which the New England lad expected as a right, the New Yorker received as a privilege to be bought in the market by well-to-do parents or given as alms to the poor. Such prominent educators as President Johnson of King's College early advocated the

public endowment of education, but it was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that the battle for the free school system was finally won.

Another obstacle which the friends of learning encountered in New York, and one which was only less formidable than the tradition that education was a private rather than a public concern, was the swamping of the commercial centers by incessant immigration in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Private educational agencies were quite unable to cope with the growing problem of illiteracy, especially when it was willful illiteracy. As early as 1713 Chaplain John Sharp of the royal army in New York complained that "the city is so conveniently Situated for Trade and the Genius of the people are so inclined to merchandise, that they generally seek no other Education for their children than writing and Arithmetick. So that letters must be in a manner forced upon them not only without their seeking but against their consent."¹ It was just this necessary element of compulsion that was lacking in the school system of colonial New York, and the results of this defect proved to be far-reaching.

¹ W. W. Kemp, *The Support of Schools in Colonial New York by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts* (1912), p. 68.

CHAPTER III

SCHOOLS OF THE MIDDLE AND SOUTHERN COLONIES

We press their memcry too soon, and puzzle, strain and load them with words and rules; to know grammar and rhetoric, and a strange tongue or two, that it is ten to one may never be useful to them; leaving their natural genius to mechanical and physical or natural knowledge uncultivated and neglected; which would be of exceeding use and pleasure to them through the whole course of their life. To be sure languages are not to be despised or neglected. But things are still to be preferred. — *William Penn.*

No colony was ever founded in a nobler spirit than was the Quaker settlement planned by William Penn in the wilderness of Pennsylvania. Religious toleration, fair dealing with the Indians, and the instruction of all children in godliness, industry, and learning were parts of the enlightened plan projected by the founder and first proprietor. The intentions of William Penn were seconded by the settlers, who passed a law that all children should be taught “so that they may be able to read the Scriptures and to write by the time they attain to

twelve years of age; and that then they be taught some useful trade or skill, that the poor may work to live, and the rich if they become poor may not want: Of which every County Court shall take care." In 1683, the year in which this law was enacted, Enoch Flower opened a school in Philadelphia under the authority of the Provincial Council. Six years later a Latin grammar school, which still exists as the William Penn Charter School, gave the Philadelphia children an opportunity for higher education. To this school poor children were admitted free, but those who could afford to do so had to pay.

The Friends, or Quakers, resembled the Dutch in their zeal for elementary education and their comparative indifference to the college, though not a few of the Quakers were themselves graduates of English universities. Yet in an age which valued the college chiefly as a means for training an educated ministry, the Quakers on account of their peculiar beliefs had less reason than others to set much value on higher education. They believed not that the clergy were an order of men set apart from the community by superior learning but that the word of God might come as readily from the lips of an ignorant man as from those of the scholar.

The Quakers founded no college in colonial times, and their schools tended to lose their public character and to become purely denominational. The very religious tolerance of the Quakers, which was so greatly to their credit, prevented the establishment of any general system of education in Pennsylvania. So many persons of every denomination flocked to this haven of liberty that no one church, not even that of the Friends, was able to dominate the colony and impose its own schools on the rest.

In the eighteenth century Pennsylvania suffered the same fate as nearly all the other colonies. The educational impress of the first founders was obliterated by the influx of immigrants of a new type, men frequently themselves as well educated as the original colonists but less concerned for the cause of education. The submergence of the Dutch schools in New Netherland and the lax enforcement of the school laws in Massachusetts were paralleled by the fading out of William Penn's ideal of education in the colony which he had founded. In some respects Pennsylvania had to face greater difficulties than did the other colonies. Nowhere else in America, perhaps, was there so little unity in the population as here. Catholics,

Quakers, Dutch Reformed, Lutherans, Episcopalians, Baptists, and Methodists all had their own church schools and refused to send their children to any other. In addition to the more powerful denominations, an unusual number of tiny sects, such as the Moravians, Mennonites, Amish, Schwenkfelders, Dunkers, and Seventh Day Baptists, founded their settlements within the province. There was, moreover, as little harmony of race as there was of religion. The Swedes and Dutch along the Delaware still clung desperately to their old language and customs; Germans, often referred to as "Pennsylvania Dutch" by their English neighbors, settled the country in large numbers; and the Scotch-Irish became a vanguard on the edge of the backwoods in the West.

As the most numerous of the alien elements of the population, the Germans early attracted the benevolent interest of the English and to such a degree that in 1754 there was organized in London a "Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge Among the Germans in America." The free schools founded by this missionary agency were unquestionably needed, but the Germans resented the patronizing implication that they were fit objects of charity, and they also feared that if their

children went to these schools they might forget their native language and abandon the religion of their fathers. Isolated by distance from the well-educated people of Germany and unwilling to enter heartily into what was to them a foreign culture, the Pennsylvania Germans too frequently grew indifferent to the schooling of their children, though their churches, notably the Moravian, labored to keep alive to some extent the old love of learning. In consequence, though the educated were but few, they never wholly "ceased out of the land."

Delaware, settled by the Swedes, is another example of high colonial hopes disappointed. Sweden stood second to no country in Europe in the matter of elementary education. About the time the Delaware settlement was made, it is said, there was not a peasant child in Sweden who had not been taught to read and write. The instructions for the colony of New Sweden in 1640 required the patrons of the colony to support "as many ministers and schoolmasters as the number of inhabitants shall seem to require." But we find the colonists of a later date complaining that they were without regular schools, that the clergy who essayed to teach the children were unequal to their task, and that there was an almost complete dearth

of school-books. In spite of the fact that New Sweden was no longer a political dependency of the mother country, the Swedes responded to this appeal by sending over catechisms, primers, and various religious works. The colonists on their part supported itinerant schoolmasters who taught in private houses and combined the exercise of their profession with the various duties of reader, clerk, sexton, or precentor in the local church.

Parish schools and a supply of catechisms from Sweden did not, however, suffice to keep alive a separate national culture in so small and isolated a community. The Swedish colony became at last but a part of an English-speaking community of very diverse origin, and its early experiments in education left no traceable mark on the later educational history of Delaware. The Dutch, during their brief occupation, and the Quakers, while Delaware was still a part of Pennsylvania, encouraged free schools within the limits of the province; but in the eighteenth century education in Delaware fell into public neglect and became wholly a matter of private charity.

New Jersey, for a time part of the Dutch colony of New Netherland, was the object of as much educational solicitude as the region east of the Hudson.

Later, under the rule of the "proprietors" of East and West Jersey, the English undertook the task of public education. In 1682 the Assembly of West Jersey granted to the town of Burlington the island of Matinicum in the Delaware River for the support of schools; and at different times several other generous land grants were made to important towns. The Assembly of East Jersey authorized the inhabitants of any town in the province to levy taxes for the establishment and support of schools; but, after New Jersey became a royal province in 1702, this attempt at founding a public school system was not followed up. New Jersey in the eighteenth century became, like all its neighbors, a land of private schools.

The Southern Colonies followed more closely the educational system of England, since they were not affected either by the Puritan zeal for public education dominant in New England or by the Dutch, Swedish, German, or Quaker traditions of the parish school as an adjunct to the local church which in one form or another characterized the school systems of the Middle Colonies. English traditions favored the foundation of private secondary schools and colleges under public patronage but did not encourage a general system of free

elementary schools. There was, however, a trace of compulsion in the laws which required guardians to take care that orphan children received an education suitable to their station in life, and in the apprentice laws which safeguarded the interests of those who were bound out to labor. One or two of the Southern Colonies advanced a little beyond English precedent. Maryland and South Carolina experimented during the eighteenth century with a system of tax-supported county schools, and, though the law was not carried out in either colony to its full intent, the poor of the more important towns always had some opportunity for a free education.

Maryland passed a law in 1696 creating a corporation to establish and govern county schools, but King William's School at Annapolis was the only public school established under this centralized system. The Assembly in 1723 established a fund for the county schools and arranged for their government by boards of visitors in each county. These Latin grammar schools were free to the poor but required fees of those who were able to pay; they varied a great deal in merit; and they had difficulty in finding competent schoolmasters at the small salaries they offered. As late as 1797 there

was complaint that King William's was the only adequately endowed school in Maryland and that "two-thirds of the little education we receive are derived from instructors who are either indentured servants or transported felons."¹ It gives the modern reader something of a shock to read of a reward offered for the return to his master of a runaway "schoolmaster, of a pale complexion, with short hair. He has the itch very bad, and sore legs," and again "he is a great taker of snuff and very apt to get drunk."

In the Carolinas special acts by the colonial legislatures permitted individual towns to establish schools, but sometimes a town failed to take advantage of this permissive law. South Carolina, by laws enacted in 1710 and 1712, founded a grammar school at Charleston which was to be open to the poor and authorized the establishment of a general system of parish schools. The provisions of these laws were not effectively carried out except in the city of Charleston, but several county grammar schools were later established on a basis similar to that of the Maryland schools. In both Carolinas the education of the poor was largely taken in hand

¹ Bernard C. Steiner, *History of Education in Maryland*, U. S. Bureau of Education (1894), No. 19, pp. 34-38.

by the Church of England through the charity schools established by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Georgia was founded so late in the colonial period that it hardly requires any special notice except for the fact that the British Crown, when it took over the colony from its trustees, continued to support a minister and two schoolmasters.

The distinction between schooling and education was particularly marked in the South. Some of the best educated men in America came from the South, and yet some of the best educated men of the South never saw the inside of a school building. Even before the Revolutionary War many plantation owners hired as private tutors for their children men who might have any degree of education from that of the indentured servant who could barely read and write to that of the cultured graduate of Oxford or Cambridge. Plantation life itself was a liberal education in agriculture, business management, horsemanship, and the conventions of polite society — subjects as essential in those days to a well-rounded career as any of the more academic branches. If a type of education is to have its value estimated by its products, the Southern plantation must rank as one of the best of

schools, since it supplied so many of the statesmen of the Revolution and of the early republic. The educational advantages of the plantation were, however, for the very few. The poor man rarely had an opportunity to advance his children beyond a knowledge of the three R's and could have them taught so much only by accepting charity.

Well-to-do men in all the colonies, but especially in the South, frequently sent their boys to schools and colleges in England. Just as our great Eastern universities today draw students from the South and West, so in those earlier days did Oxford and Cambridge attract the ambitious youth of America. It was hard to establish colleges on the new continent when they had to compete with the prestige of such ancient and well-endowed institutions of learning in the Old World. If the voyage to England had not then been so long, costly, and hazardous, several of the colonial colleges might never have been founded. Some discerning Englishmen saw in this intellectual dependence on the mother country one of the surest bonds which kept the British Empire from disintegration, and they viewed with a mixture of sympathy and apprehension the rise of new academies and colleges. Said one William Eddis, a surveyor of customs at

Annapolis, in 1773: "When the real or supposed necessity ceases of sending the youth of this continent to distant seminaries for the completion of their education, the attachment of the colonies to Great Britain will gradually weaken, and a less frequent intercourse will tend to encourage those sentiments of self-importance which have already taken too deep root, and which, I fear, the utmost exertions of political wisdom will never be able wholly to eradicate."¹

Perhaps Cecil Rhodes had in mind the omen of this true prophecy when he established scholarships at Oxford for the youth of the British Dominions. When a colony makes its own laws and its own hardware, it may still be loyal to the mother country from motives of sentiment; but when it writes its own books and reads its own newspapers, it loses all sense of dependence and becomes either a new nation or an equal partner within a common federation. The schools and colleges of America, imperfect and inadequate though they were, sufficed even at an early date to create a separate "consciousness of kind" among the colonists and helped to make possible the establishment of the United States.

¹ Steiner, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

CHAPTER IV

THE COLONIAL COLLEGE

After wee had builded our houses, provided necessities for our livelihood, reared convenient places for God's worship, and settled the Civill Government, one of the next things wee longed for and looked after was to advance Learning and to perpetuate it to Posterity; dreading to leave an illiterate ministry to the Churches, when our present Ministers shall lie in the Dust. And as wee were thinking and consulting how to effect this great Work, it pleased God to stir up the heart of one Mr. *Harvard* (a godly gentleman and a lover of Learning, there living amongst us) to give the one-half of his estate (it being in all about £1,700) towards the erecting of a Colledge, and all his library. After him another gave £300; others after them cast in more, and the publique hand of the State added the rest. — *New England's First Fruits.*

COULD John Harvard revisit the university which bears his name and the town which bears that of his own Alma Mater, Cambridge, he would doubtless find much to surprise him, but he would find that America still combined the most munificent private generosity towards the cause of higher education with the unfailing aid of "the publique hand of the State." The colonial college, of which

Harvard was the first example, is the parent not only of the modern private university but of the State supported institution as well. Even in the colonies outside New England where the Government did little for the common schools, the college was never left wholly dependent upon fees and benefactions. The public authorities were always ready to do something, if it were only to hold a lottery in aid of the endowment.

The bequest of the godly John Harvard came in the nick of time to save the struggling young college founded in 1636 at Newtown, later Cambridge. The £400 voted by the General Court of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay proved hardly sufficient to build a flourishing school, although it amounted to as much as all other public expenses of the colony for that year. John Harvard's bequest of two hundred and sixty books, mainly treatises on theology, was a bigger proportionate addition to the intellectual resources of the community than a gift of the million volumes now on the shelves of Harvard library would be today. It was an accident or, as Puritan Massachusetts would have said, a providence that the College ever received this bequest, for John Harvard, when he died in 1638, had been in the colony barely a year.

All the colonial colleges made an attempt to copy the English universities of Oxford and Cambridge, but they were at first too poor to become universities in the English sense of federations of many undergraduate colleges. Each college was wholly simple in its structure, with but one faculty and one course of study. The American system never, indeed, included under the nominal control of one examining body a number of coördinate colleges of independent foundation offering practically similar courses of study. When, in later years, new schools and departments were founded and the American college developed into the American university, there still remained but one general or academic college apart from the specialized professional schools. The early colonial college itself was originally in one respect something of a professional school, as its foremost aim was not to give "the education of a gentleman" to young men of means and leisure but to train a learned ministry.

The formal education which was prevalent in Europe in the seventeenth century and which was transplanted to colonial America emphasized two subjects: the classics of Greece and Rome and the duties of the Christian to his Creator. In those days Latin was the language of culture, and theology

was queen of the sciences. The boy who had graduated from a grammar school was expected to be able to read and write easy Latin and to know a little of Greek grammar. Did his knowledge extend to these points, he had satisfied the requirements for admission to Harvard. Nobody bothered to ask him whether he could add a column of figures twice and get the same answer both times, or name the principal rivers of New England, or even spell his native tongue correctly. Once admitted to the college, he spent little time in the formal study of Latin but he practiced its daily use in the classroom and in private conversation. Latin was the key to knowledge, and the storehouse of wisdom was the college.

A somewhat varied mental diet was set before the student, but he was compelled to partake of whatever was given him. No broad elective system of studies *à la carte* had yet been devised. The college youth of those days studied the Bible throughout his course and, for a year, "catechetical divinity." Mainly that he might be able to read the New Testament in the original he studied Greek, and that he might be able to read the Old Testament he took a year of Hebrew. At one time Chaldee and Syriac were also taught. On the other

hand, if the student wished to learn a little French or German, he could get no help from the college. Logic, ethics, and politics were each studied for two years, and a few lectures on physics, history, and botany were sometimes slipped into the course. The bachelor's degree was conferred upon every scholar "able to read the originals of the Old and New Testament into the Latin tongue, and to resolve them logically," provided he were "of Godly life and conversation." For the master's degree, the bachelor must present a thesis and defend it.

In addition to the formal defense of the master's thesis, a number of "disputations" were introduced into the college course. Sometimes these dealt with such profundities of metaphysics as, "Is the act of creation eternal?" Or they might involve more detailed theological problems such as, "When Balaam's ass spoke, was there any change in its organs?" Anon it would be such a scientific question as, for instance, "Were the aborigines of America descended from Abraham?" Occasionally one strikes much more modern notes: "Is the voice of the people the voice of God?" "Is it lawful to sell Africans?" or, to choose an example from disputations at Yale, "Whether the Latin and Greek languages are studied too much in America."

In the seventeenth century, when Harvard was practically a Congregational theological seminary, this exercise in forensics was excellent training for the practice of the ministry, and a century later, when law and politics came to the fore, the same type of disputations brought out any talent for oratory that might be lurking in the young collegian. Cotton Mather, who was admitted to Harvard College at the age of twelve, writes of his studies there:

I composed *Systems* both of *Logick* and *Physick*, in *Catachisms* of my own, which have been since used by many others. I went over the use of *Globes* and proceeded in *Arithmetic* as far as was ordinary. I made *Theses* and Antitheses upon the main *Questions* that lay before me. For my *Declamations* I ordinarily took some Article of *Natural Philosophy* for my subject, by which contrivances I did Kill two birds with one Stone. Hundreds of books I read over, and I kept a Diary of my studies. *My son* I would not have mentioned these things, but that I may provoke *your* emulation.

The more important of the early colleges add an interesting chapter to the story of the rise of modern American education. The first head of Harvard, Nathaniel Eaton, had a career that was brief and inglorious. In these days of committees on academic discipline, it is interesting to read that

he was finally removed from office for beating a boy too severely. By the laws of the college, misconduct might be punished as in the common school: "If any scholar shall transgress any of the laws of God, or the House . . . after twice admonition, he shall be liable, if not adultus, to correction; if adultus, his name shall be given up to the Overseers of the College." But Eaton exceeded his privilege in this respect. What was worse, he and his wife neglected the material welfare of the students, who had to make their own beds or clean their own rooms if the work were to be done at all, and "their diet was ordinarily nothing but porridge and pudding, and that very homely." Complaints against the "commons" have been frequent in most colleges but rarely with better justification than during the early days of Harvard.

Better days came when Henry Dunster took charge of Harvard in 1640, with the title of President. He was a vigorous and capable executive, whose energy placed the college for the first time on a secure and permanent basis. But he fell into the heresy of "antipædobaptism," and Puritan Massachusetts — which did not tolerate the Baptists, as Roger Williams found to his cost — put President Dunster out of his position. The one

concession granted to him on his dismissal was that he might be allowed to remain in the President's house until the winter was over. After his time Harvard became such a battleground for theologians that it soon became difficult to find an able man to take the presidency. Orthodox Calvinism found a strong champion in President Increase Mather, and Liberalism one in President John Leverett. The latter was bitterly attacked by Cotton Mather, the son of Increase Mather and himself an unsuccessful candidate for the presidency of the college. He complained that pious youths who went to Harvard graduated as sceptics and heretics, that the students filled their rooms "with books which may be truly called Satan's library," and he demanded an inquiry "whether the books mostly read among them are not plays, novels, empty and vicious pieces of poetry."

The suspicion of too lax theology which thus early attached itself to Harvard College was one cause for the establishment of Yale, the third college to be founded in the English colonies, and the first American instance of academic parenthood. Harvard had been founded by men educated in England, but Yale was the work of graduates of Harvard. It is perhaps remarkable that,

considering the jealousies of different colonies and churches, Harvard remained for some two generations without a rival. Poverty, the French, and the Indians seem to have been the three leading causes for the educational monopoly so long enjoyed by the Massachusetts college.

In 1701 several devout Congregational ministers gave generously of their scanty hoard of books towards the foundation of a college in Connecticut, rightly thinking that the way to begin a college was with a library. During the same year the General Assembly authorized the erection of a "collegiate school" to fit students for "Publick employment both in Church and Civil State," thus striking from the very beginning that note of statecraft and public service which has ever since been the dominant ideal of Yale.

For several years, however, Yale College lacked both a permanent local habitation and a name. For fifteen years the college was located at Saybrook, but the actual teaching was frequently done elsewhere. In 1717 a permanent home, the "College House," was begun in New Haven, and the following year it received the name of Yale College after Elihu Yale, one of its earliest and most munificent benefactors.

Elihu Yale was a child of Boston, though for the greater part of his active career he was in the Indian civil service and finally rose to be Governor of Fort St. George at Madras. But he always retained an interest in the distant land of his birth and was easily persuaded to give books and money to the struggling little college at New Haven.

Another benefactor of Yale who deserves to be mentioned in this connection was Bishop George Berkeley, the English philosopher, whose cherished dream it had been to found a college in the New World. His first thought was to establish one in the Bermudas but, unable to realize this plan, he wisely turned to Yale instead. He gave his Rhode Island farm, still known as the Dean's farm, to the college and also presented it with a carefully selected library of nearly a thousand volumes. The roll of the Berkeleyan scholarship which he founded bears the names of twelve college presidents. His name is further commemorated in the seat of a still larger institution on the other side of the continent, the University of California.

With the foundation of Harvard and Yale the needs of the Congregationalists were met. Those who considered Harvard too liberal could obtain a purer Calvinism from the sister college. But other

denominations were growing to importance and were demanding educational opportunities. The needs of the Presbyterian community were met by the organization of the College of New Jersey at Princeton; the Dutch Reformed could go to Queens, now Rutgers; the Anglicans had King's, now Columbia, and the Baptists, Brown. During the eighteenth century an increasing number of young men went to college who had no thoughts of entering the ministry, and they were usually made welcome regardless of any niceties of creed. In the charter of Brown University, for example, there was this provision: "Into this Liberal & Catholic Institution shall never be admitted any Religious Tests but on the Contrary all the Members hereof shall for ever enjoy full free Absolute and uninterrupted Liberty of Conscience." Words could hardly be more emphatic, and the liberal intention of the Baptist founders was further demonstrated by another provision giving a certain number of Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Quakers, and Episcopalians places on the Board of Trustees. Yet the rules of Brown forbade any student to assert his disbelief in Christianity, except "Young Gentlemen of the Hebrew Nation." Of all the colonial colleges the nearest to a complete

independence of denominational influences was the University of Pennsylvania, which was founded in the middle of the century.

The eighteenth century witnessed not only a relaxation of strict doctrinal requirements in the colleges but the introduction of a broader curriculum. Hebrew took a minor place in the course of study, and more emphasis was placed upon the purely literary side of Greek and Latin. More attention began to be paid to mathematics and the sciences, and every college did its best to obtain a few physical and astronomical instruments with which to demonstrate to the pupils the wonders of nature and to the parents the fact that the institution was awake to the spirit of the times. Nothing could be more significant than these words from the prospectus issued in 1754 by Samuel Johnson, the first President of King's College, now Columbia University:

And *lastly*, a serious, *virtuous*, and *industrious* Course of Life being first provided for, it is further the Design of this College to instruct and perfect the Youth in the Learned Languages, and in the Arts of *reasoning* exactly, of *writing* correctly, and *speaking* eloquently; and in the Arts of *numbering* and *measuring*; of *Surveying* and *Navigation*, of *Geography* and *History*, of *Husbandry*, *Commerce* and *Government*, and in the Knowledge

of *all Nature* in the *Heavens* above us, and in the *Air*, *Water* and *Earth* around us, and the various kinds of *Meteors*, *Stones*, *Mines* and *Minerals*, *Plants* and *Animals*, and of every Thing *useful* for the Comfort, the Convenience and the Elegance of Life, in the chief *Manufactures* relating to any of these Things: And, finally, to lead them from the Study of Nature to the Knowledge of themselves, and of the God of Nature, and their Duty to Him, themselves, and one another, and every Thing that can contribute to their true Happiness, both here and hereafter.

It may, indeed, be fairly questioned whether King's College or any other college of the time could even approximate the realization of such a comprehensive ideal as this. But it is certain that no college or university since then has advanced beyond it, and it is equally certain that by the time of the Revolution all the American colleges were more or less actuated by a belief that education should include more than piety and grammar.

The last thing to be modernized in the American college was its discipline. The rod was, indeed, finally expelled from the higher institutions of learning. But the undergraduate was bound to a fixed routine of life by a double system of laws, those of the college and those of the campus. The college authorities saw to it that the student arose

betimes, usually at six o'clock, that he missed no lectures or recitations, that he kept regular hours of study, that he shunned all bad habits, and that on all occasions he showed due courtesy and subordination to his superiors. In Harvard, for example, it was ordered that

No scholar shall take tobacco, unless permitted by the President, with the consent of their parents and guardians, and on good reason first given by a physician, and then in a sober and private manner.

To see that such rules were kept, the student was deprived of the right of privacy. A rather amusing regulation at Brown reveals the existence of a system of "domiciliary visits" which today would be thought to verge on the intrusive:

No student shall refuse to open the door when he shall hear the stamp of the foot or staff at his door in the entry, which shall be a token that an officer of instruction desires admission, which token every student is forbid to counterfeit, or imitate under any pretense whatever.

And were these students too docile to require such rigid discipline or might the officer of instruction who banged on the floor outside the study expect to find some mischief within? To tell the truth, the colonial undergraduate at certain times and places was more unruly than his counterpart of the

present day. Let Philip Fithian relate from a page of his diary for 1770 how things then went in the good Presbyterian College of New Jersey. Among the amusements he specifies are:

Strewing the entries in the Night with greasy Feathers; freezing the Bell; Ringing it at late Hours of the Night . . . writing witty pointed anonymous Papers . . . Picking from the neighborhood now and then a plump fat Hen or Turkey . . . Darting Sunbeams upon the Town-People, Reconoitering Houses in the Town, & ogling Women with a Telescope — Making Squibs, & other frightful compositions with Gunpowder, & lighting them in the Rooms of timorous Boys & new comers.

Yet in the same college of which Mr. Fithian tells such mischievous deeds and at the same period, the faculty, ever solicitous for the good conduct of the students in their charge, prohibited the game of shinny because it sometimes resulted in accidents and because there were “many amusements both more honorable and more useful in which they are indulged.”

An interesting glimpse of student life in those distant college days is given in the following letter:

Written at Princeton, Jan. 13, Anno 1772.

VERY DEAR, & MUCH RESPECTED FATHER,

Through the distinguished Kindness of Heaven, I am in good Health, & have much Cause to be delighted

with my Lot. I would not change my Condition nor give up the Prospect I have before me, on any Terms almost whatever.

I am not much hurried this Winter with my Studies; but I am trying to advance myself in an Acquaintance with my fellow-Creatures, & with the Labours of the "Mighty Dead."

I am sorry that I may inform you, that two of our Members were expelled from the College yesterday; not for Drunkenness, nor Fighting, not for Swearing, nor Sabbath-Breaking. But, they were sent from this Seminary, where the greatest Pains and Care are taken to cultivate and encourage *Decency*, & *Honesty*, & *Honour*, for stealing *Hens*! Shameful, mean, unmanly Conduct!

If a Person were to judge of the generality of Students, by the Conduct of such earth-born, insatiate Helluo's; or by the detested Character of wicked Individuals, (which is generally soonest & most extensively propagated & known abroad,) how terrible an Idea must he have!

Please to remember my kind Regards to my Brothers; Sister BECKA & the whole Family. I feel my Heart warm with Esteem for them! but can only further, at present, write myself, dear Father, Yours,

P. FITHIAN

It is hardly necessary to say that organized athletics had little place in the colonial college compared with their vogue in the modern American college and university. Even as recently as the Civil War an English observer, while

greatly praising the earnest zeal of the American undergraduate in his studies, had this to say:

The utmost physical recreation seemed to consist in a country walk, and I doubt if even this was common. This absence of desire for physical sports seems more or less common throughout America, and is very strange in the eyes of those accustomed to the exhibition of animal spirits in the English youth of both sexes.¹

But the current of youthful energy which was forbidden to flow freely in the path of athletics found its outlets elsewhere, and not only in miscellaneous mischief such as shocked the young Fithian. There were no Greek letter societies until Phi Beta Kappa was organized in 1776, but rival literary societies with long Greek names served equally well as centers of social life and generators of clan loyalty. Ritual functions accumulated around commencement and other college anniversaries. Special local customs, such as the burning of Euclid at the end of a mathematical course, took root and spread, and even before the advent of college journalism the poet and the satirist found opportunity to make known their talent to the campus.

¹Sophia Jex Blake, *A Visit to Some American Schools and Colleges* (1867), p. 33.

However greatly the student may have resented the paternal oversight of his conduct which custom then required of the faculty, he submitted willingly to the no less exacting informal discipline imposed upon him by his older fellows, hoping perhaps to become a despot in his turn. The Freshman rules of today are but a survival of the iron code prevalent in colonial times. The English fagging system still obtained; Freshmen were compelled to perform "all reasonable errands for any superior," as the Yale rules of 1764 put it. To quote further from the Yale code, "A Senior may take a Freshman from a Sophomore, a Bachelor from a Junior, and a Master from a Senior." The Freshman must stand aside for upperclassmen at entrances or on stairways, must refrain from such boisterous conduct as running in the college yard or calling from a window, and must not sit in the presence of an upperclassman or other superior without special permission.

These questions of college life are not so remote from the main purpose of education as they may seem. Just as the instructor made correctness and propriety of expression the aim of literary teaching and discouraged the original if it were also the unconventional, and just as the college President and

his assistants made the faith and morals of their charges their chief concern, so did the student body accept and impose its own discipline to curb the eccentric or nonconformist Freshman. Individuality, in a word, was taken for granted, but it was something to be restrained rather than fostered. Perhaps this was a wise course in a frontier commonwealth; perhaps this type of disciplinary education was necessary to give social cohesion to the young republic whose leaders and founders were trained by the colonial college. At all events, the education provided was, as far as it went, no sham. College was no excuse for idling, as too commonly was the case in eighteenth century Oxford and Cambridge. The American student obtained his degree only by hard intellectual work and, not infrequently, he remained in college only by supporting himself there by hard work of another kind. America had yet to create a leisure class.

CHAPTER V

FRANKLIN AND PRACTICAL EDUCATION

Franklin's is the weightiest voice that has as yet sounded from across the Atlantic. — *Matthew Arnold*.

FRANKLIN'S name is likely to occur in the first paragraphs of any history of American activities, whether the subject be diplomacy or printing, electricity or finance, literature or ventilation, religion or soap-making. Certainly it would be impossible to write of American education without mention of the various projects that originated in his versatile and ingenious mind. Franklin was self-educated. His theory and practice of mental and moral education are given in his *Autobiography*. Franklin was sent to the Boston Grammar School when he was eight but was soon withdrawn for, as the youngest son of seventeen children, he was needed by his father to assist in molding tallow candles. At the age of twelve he was apprenticed to a brother who was a printer and thus was started

upon the path, since followed by many Americans, that leads through journalism to statesmanship. Giving his nights to the study of Addison — by means of an odd volume of the *Spectator* purloined from a bookseller — he taught himself a style quite un-Addisonian, a terse, brisk, businesslike, plain, matter-of-fact style that has since become characteristic of American newspapers. The lucidity of his papers on electricity is in marked contrast with the bombastic and obscure style of contemporary savants. He even ventured to carry his clarity into the realms of diplomacy and philosophy, where it was still more of an innovation.

His theory of conduct he was not afraid to put to the pragmatic test — and it worked. Entering Philadelphia as a runaway apprentice at the age of seventeen, penniless and ragged, he was able, by the practice of the thrift and vigilance that he preached, to retire with a competency at the age of forty-two in order to devote himself to researches in electricity, though the calls of public service kept him busy throughout his long life. He found Philadelphia behind Boston in two respects, “there being no provision for defense nor for a compleat education of youth; no militia nor any college.” He promptly set about

remedying both defects and in the course of time was successful.

His first step in the way of coöperative effort was the formation of the Junto, a sort of fraternity or debating society, somewhat after the plan of the Benefit Societies that Cotton Mather had started in the Congregational churches of Massachusetts. The dozen young men who composed it met every Friday evening to discuss political, scientific, and moral questions, and to consider ways of helping one another and the community. This may be regarded as the precursor of the American lyceum which was to exercise so powerful an influence over the thought and politics of the nation in the century to come. Each member of the Junto, at Franklin's suggestion, agreed to put the few books he owned into a room where they could be used in common. He next obtained subscriptions from fifty persons and was able to send off to London an order for £45 worth of books. In this way a permanent circulating library was opened, with Franklin as librarian to give out the books once a week. To the Junto we therefore owe the origin of the public library system which in America has attained proportions unequaled anywhere else in the world. As Franklin says:

This was the mother of all the North American subscription libraries, now so numerous. It is become a great thing in itself and continually increasing. These libraries have improved the general conversation of the Americans, made the common trades men and farmers as intelligent as most gentlemen from other countries, and perhaps have contributed in some degree to the stand so generally made throughout the colonies in defense of their privileges.

To estimate the value or trace the influence of the library movement started by Benjamin Franklin is impossible here, but one of its many radiations is of educational interest. Franklin's popularity made him the godfather to seventy-two towns, and from one of the earliest — a Massachusetts town — came in 1784 the announcement that it had taken the name of Franklin and the suggestion that he present it with a church bell. Franklin replied that, "sense being preferable to sound," he would give them a town library instead, and so he sent them sixty-eight works "such as are most proper to inculcate the principles of sound religion and just government." In this same little town of Franklin, Massachusetts, there was born a dozen years later a boy by the name of Horace Mann. He was educated, as he says himself, in "the smallest school in the poorest schoolhouse

with the cheapest teachers in the State," but he had access to one avenue leading to the world of letters, the library that Franklin had given to the town in lieu of a bell. Horace Mann, thus rescued from ignorance, became in time the promoter of the American public school for Massachusetts and for the nation. He used to say that he would like to scatter libraries broadcast over the land as a farmer sows his wheat, and this dream of his has been realized today by Andrew Carnegie.

Franklin's plans for an Academy at Philadelphia are contained in the *Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pensilvania* which he drew up in 1749 and later printed in pamphlet form. This aged and neglected document reads like the prospectus of some "modern school" desired by Charles W. Eliot and Abraham Flexner, or one of the "schools of tomorrow" described by John Dewey. It is based upon a psychology of learning whose principles have only recently come into recognition — that learning comes by doing, that the concrete should precede the abstract, that individual abilities and vocational aims should be early recognized, and that the time to take up a particular study is when the desire for it has been awakened.

History, for instance, which occupies a large

place in Franklin's scheme, he would have taught by the extensive reading of translations of the Greek and Roman historians, with the use of maps and prints of medals and monuments, "followed by the best modern histories, particularly of our mother country, then of these colonies." It is universal and comparative history that he wants, with special reference to customs, politics, religion, natural resources, commerce, and the growth of science. History, thus properly taught, would naturally lead to the study of ethics, logic, physics, oratory, debating, and journalism. A few passages will show what Franklin had in mind:

History will show the wonderful effects of oratory in governing, turning and leading great bodies of mankind, armies, cities, nations. *When* the minds of youth are struck with admiration at this, *then is the time* to give them the principles of that art, which they will study with taste and application. Then they may be made acquainted with the best models among the ancients, their beauties being particularly pointed out to them. Modern political oratory being chiefly performed by pen and press, its advantages over the ancients in some respects are to be shown; as that its effects are more extensive, more lasting, etc. . . .

On historical occasions, questions of right and wrong, justice and injustice, will naturally arise, and may be put to youth, which they may debate in conversation

and in writing. *When they ardently desire victory, for the sake of the praise attending it, they will begin to feel the want*, and be sensible of the use of logic, or the art of reasoning to discover truth, and of arguing to defend it, and convince adversaries. *This would be the time* to acquaint them with the principles of that art. . . .

The history of commerce, of the invention of arts, rise of manufacture, progress of trade, change of its seats, with the reasons, causes, etc., may also be made entertaining to youth and will be useful to all. And this, with the accounts in other history of the prodigious force and effect of engines and machines used in war *will naturally introduce a desire* to be instructed in mechanics and to be informed of the principles of that art by which weak men perform such wonders, labor is saved, manufactures expedited, etc. *This will be the time* to show them prints of ancient and modern machines, to explain them and let them be copied, and to give lectures in mechanical philosophy.

Certain words have been italicized in the passage just quoted to show how clearly Franklin had conceived of the Herbartian principle of the necessity of an "apperceptive basis" for the reception of knowledge nearly a hundred years before Herbart became known, and also that he advocated the "case-method" of teaching ethics now brought forward as a novelty.

All intended for divinity should be taught the Latin and Greek; for physic [medical students] the Latin,

Greek and French; for law, the Latin and French; merchants, the French, German and Spanish; and though all should not be compelled to learn Latin, Greek or the modern foreign languages, yet none that have an ardent desire to learn them should be refused; their English, arithmetic and other studies absolutely necessary, being at the same time not neglected.

Franklin had acquired by his own exertions a practical acquaintance with French, Spanish, and Italian, and then had found Latin easier than he expected. From this experience he came to the conclusion that it would be better for any student to begin with the modern languages and then proceed to the ancient. If circumstances then prevented him from studying the ancient, he would be sure at least of having the more useful modern languages. Franklin pointed out that Latin and Greek were put into the European schools for utilitarian purposes, because all the science, law, and theology of an earlier day were to be obtained only in these languages, but, he said, they have become "the *chapeau bras* of modern literature" — the fashionable hat of the eighteenth century, once useful but now degenerated to a mere honorific appendage.

As Franklin attempted nothing less than a

change of the center of gravity from Latin to English, it is not to be wondered at that such heretical ideas failed of acceptance by his generation. He got the money for his projected Academy, with English nominally recognized as a language equal to Latin, but, as has so often happened, the "modern side" was starved out while the Latin school was fostered in spite of Franklin's protest against such a misapplication of funds.

The institution thus started, however, developed into the University of Pennsylvania, of which Franklin was for forty years a trustee and which he could now commend for carrying out many of his ideas. The University of Pennsylvania was from the start free from the sectarian influences which prevailed in other colleges. Here was opened in 1765 the first school of medicine in America. History, politics, and economics, which formed the core of Franklin's scheme of education, have always been especially prominent in this institution.

At the same time that Franklin was urging the establishment of an Academy he launched another movement of almost equal importance. His *Proposal for Promoting Useful Knowledge Among the British Plantations in America*, published in 1743, called for a society to be formed "of virtuosi or

ingenious men residing in the several colonies," corresponding to, and to correspond with, the Royal Society of London and the Dublin Society. This proposal resulted in the formation of the American Philosophical Society, of which Franklin was president until his death in 1790. In the *Transactions* of this Society many of the chief American contributions to science have appeared. Here are to be found Franklin's paper on *The Cause and Cure of Smoky Chimneys*, in which he anticipates the modern system of ventilation and house-heating; Priestley's *Experiments and Observations on different kinds of Air*, for the English discoverer of oxygen had been mobbed out of Birmingham and had taken refuge in America, where he aided Franklin and Jefferson in their educational reforms; the researches of Draper on the composition of the sun; Joseph Henry's experiments on electro-magnetic induction; and the paleontological investigations of Leidy, Cope, and Hayden.

An institution, says Emerson, is but the lengthened shadow of a great man, and there is not space enough here to do more than refer to some of the shadows of this sort which Franklin cast. The excellent manual training schools of Philadelphia; Girard College, founded through the bequest of

\$2,000,000 by Stephen Girard in 1830 to give a practical, moral, and patriotic education to orphans; the Franklin Institute, founded in 1824 for the promotion of mechanic arts; the so-called German College of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, to which Franklin was the chief contributor and which was later named after him — these are but some of the educational establishments that he instigated or inspired.

One other scheme of Franklin's deserves attention, partly because it is characteristic of the man, and partly because of its economic interest. His bequest of £1000 to Boston and Philadelphia, to be lent out in small amounts at five per cent to young married artificers for the purpose of setting them up in business, would, he calculated, amount to £131,000 by the end of a century. He would then have £100,000 spent on objects of public utility and the remaining £31,000 again put out at interest for another hundred years, by the end of which time it would provide £4,061,000 to be spent by the city and State. Franklin seems to have also had the secondary object of illustrating how rapidly money breeds but, as it turned out, the bequest illustrated rather the futility of attempting to anticipate in detail the needs of the distant future.

The number of married artificers under twenty-five who wanted to borrow from \$65 to \$300 "for setting up their business" fell off in the course of years until, in 1890, the Philadelphia fund reached only \$86,280 instead of the \$655,000 which Franklin had calculated. Of the Boston fund, after passing through the inevitable period of litigation, \$400,000 was available in 1908. This amount was doubled by Andrew Carnegie, and with it there was erected the Franklin Union for evening courses in industrial education.

Franklin's best work as an educator of the American people was, after all, not accomplished through these various institutions but directly through the medium of his pamphlets, newspapers, and almanacs. *Poor Richard's Almanack* was the only book in thousands of homesteads, and his proverbial philosophy became the common coin of conversation from which his image and superscription have long been obliterated through constant usage. Father Abraham's speech at the vendue on how to remedy hard times, a medley of Poor Richard's sayings, has been translated into all languages and reprinted four hundred times.

Franklin was as much of an economist as a man could be before the science of economics was born.

He anticipated Malthus in the law of the relation of population to sustenance and Adam Smith in the measure of value by the labor involved. Franklin's experimental proof of the similar nature of lightning and the Leyden spark was a scientific discovery of the first order, and his "one-fluid" theory of electricity, his conception of positive and negative electrification, has not only served as a useful hypothesis ever since but is strikingly in keeping with the modern electron theory. But Franklin himself did not get so much gratification out of such contributions to science as he did from the thought that he had taught some millions of people such homely truths as these:

He that goes a-borrowing goes a-sorrowing.

Experience keeps a dear school, but fools will learn at
no other.

It is hard for an empty sack to stand upright.

He who by the plow would thrive
Himself must either hold or drive.

CHAPTER VI

JEFFERSON AND STATE EDUCATION

A system of education which shall reach every description of citizen from the richest to the poorest, as it was the earliest, so will it be the latest of all public concerns in which I shall permit myself to take an interest. Nor am I tenacious of the form in which it shall be introduced. — *Thomas Jefferson (1817).*

THE founders of the Republic were men of long stride, and the United States has found it hard to keep up the pace they set. Certain phrases that Jefferson put into the Declaration of Independence as too obvious to need argument still arouse admiration or despair when Americans listen to the reading of their political creed on the Fourth of July. What Jefferson actually accomplished in education was little; but what he aspired to and inspired others to was immense. The appraisal of his achievement depends upon whether the balance-sheet is drawn during his life or a hundred years later. In an aristocratic environment he cherished a democratic ideal, and he converted to the

principle of free schools and state support a people who had been committed to restricted education and individual responsibility.

Jefferson said that he was not "tenacious of the form" in which his idea of universal education should be introduced — and, indeed, the realization of his project came about in a way very different from his plan and much later than he had hoped. His native State was slow to follow his leadership. It was not until 1870 that a public school system was established in Virginia, and even at the beginning of the twentieth century 60 per cent of the children were not in the schools.

The power of a personality, like the strength of an electric current, may be measured by the resistance it can overcome. An appreciation of Jefferson's achievement involves a brief review of the earlier history of education in Virginia which had a very different beginning from New England. The *Mayflower* in 1620 brought to the New World 53 men, 21 women, and 28 children. The three ships coming to Virginia in 1609 contained 100 "settlers," among whom there were 55 gentlemen and 12 servants, but no children. Ten years later, when it occurred to the London Company of Virginia that children were desirable in a colony, they

shipped over a batch of one hundred assorted "orphants" to be apprenticed to the planters on condition that they be taught some useful trade and the Christian religion. This was the origin of that apprentice system which, in Virginia and other colonies, was the first form of compulsory education for poor children.

Later in the seventeenth century some "free" schools were established by bequests from philanthropic persons. Among these may be mentioned the Symms School, which received from its founder two hundred acres of land and an endowment of the calves and milk of eight cows. The Eaton Free School was more wealthy. It possessed five hundred acres of land, stocked with "two negroes, twelve cows, two bulls, and twenty hogs."

But such efforts at the extension of education among the lower classes did not meet with much encouragement from the wealthier colonists. The planters employed private tutors or engaged the leisure of Church of England clergymen but did not think it wise to educate the poorer people above their proper station. The Lords Commissioners of Trades and Plantations inquired, in 1671: "What course is taken about instructing the people within your government in the Christian religion and

what provision is there for the paying of your ministry?" Governor Berkeley answered: "The same course that is taken in England out of towns; every man according to his ability instructing his children. We have forty-eight parishes and our ministers are well paid and by my consent should be better if they would pray oftener and preach less. . . . But, I thank God, there are no free schools nor printing, and I hope we shall not have these hundred years, for learning has brought disobedience and heresy and sects into the world, and printing has divulged them and libels against the best government. God keep us from both!"

The early efforts to start higher education in Virginia met with even more emphatic opposition. The London Company in 1619 granted a thousand acres of land at Henrico on the James River for a college for the Indians and nine thousand acres for a college for the English. The bishops of England raised \$35,000 in money and obtained many gifts of books and plate. George Thorpe of the King's Privy Chamber, a gentleman "learned in scholarship and zealous in piety," was chosen as head of the university, but the Indians soon put an end to the ambitious enterprise by scalping him and sixteen of his tenants. As a result it was felt that the

Indians were not yet ripe for higher education, and when another movement was projected in 1624 to establish a university it was to be confined to the whites and located upon an island in the Susquehanna River. Though Edwin Palmer of London drew up a fine plan for the grounds and buildings of the Academia Virginiensis et Oxoniensis and gave all his lands in America for the project, nothing came of this second attempt at colonial education in the South.

In 1660 the Assembly of Virginia showed its realization of the need of higher education at least for the ministry by passing the following law:

Whereas the want of able and faithful ministers in this country deprives us of these great blessings and mercies that allwaies attend upon the service of God which want by reason of our great distance from our native country cannot in probability be allwaies supplied from thence, *Bee itt enacted* that for the advance of learning, education of youth, supply of the ministry, and promotion of piety there be land taken upon purchases for a college and freeschoole and that there be with as much speede as may be convenient houseing erected thereon for entertainment of students and schollers.

The Assembly having thus approved of the project, contributions were called for, and the Burgesses and government officials, including even

Governor Berkeley, "severally subscribed severall considerable sumes of money and quantityes of tobacco." But these donations were to be paid in only after the college had been started, and it was then discovered — what solicitors of college funds have often noted since — that "the subscribed money did not come in with the same readiness with which it had been underwritten." For thirty years the project languished, but in 1691 an energetic young Scotch clergyman, the Reverend James Blair, took it in hand and went back to England to get the necessary money. Tactfully planning his campaign, he went first to the bishops, then to the Queen, next to the King, and finally to the Attorney-General. Their Majesties, learning that a college in Virginia had been named after them, willingly agreed to contribute to its building two thousand pounds out of the quitrents of Virginia. But when Attorney-General Seymour was approached, he declared that the Government could not afford such expenditures until after the war. Blair explained that the purpose of the college as expressed in an act of the Virginia Assembly was to educate young men for the ministry and observed that Virginians had souls to be saved as well as Englishmen at home. Seymour did not see

the necessity. "Souls!" he exclaimed. "Damn your souls! Make tobacco!"¹

But Blair persisted and not only got the royal grant but valuable donations from other sources, including — since he had no qualms about tainted money — three hundred pounds from pirates. Besides these endowments the College of William and Mary received twenty thousand acres of land, an export tax on tobacco of a penny a pound, and a monopoly of the land office business. Some years after the founding of the institution, taxes for the benefit of the College of William and Mary were imposed upon two other luxuries, liquors and furs.

So founded, the College of William and Mary, chartered in 1693, was second only to Harvard in seniority and in its first century was not behind its New England rival in usefulness if tested, as a college should be tested, by the quality of the men it turned out. To this "Alma Mater of statesmen," as it came to be called, belongs the honor of having trained three Presidents of the United States, Thomas Jefferson, James Monroe, and John Tyler, also Peyton Randolph, the president of the Continental Congress, and John Marshall the great

¹This is one of the stories which Franklin loved to tell. See Sparks's *Works of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. x, p. 111.

interpreter of the Constitution, as well as governors and senators of Virginia too numerous to mention. In 1779, when Jefferson was on the Board of Trustees, the College was made into a university, and such innovations in American education as lecture courses on political economy and on municipal, constitutional, and international law were introduced and made elective. Here, too, was started, in the year of the Declaration of Independence, the patriotic and literary society known as Phi Beta Kappa, the first of the host of Greek-letter intercollegiate fraternities now flourishing.

The College of William and Mary was the child of Church and State. Until after the Revolution the Bishop of London was its Chancellor and his commissary or deputy in Virginia its President. The Reverend James Blair, its indefatigable promoter, served as President for its first half century. The college was represented in the Virginia House of Burgesses by a member elected by the faculty, a system that still survives in England where the universities are represented in the House of Commons. But when the capital was removed from Williamsburg, the seat of the college, to Richmond in 1779, the close connection of William and Mary with the political life of the State was broken; and

when Jefferson established the University of Virginia in 1819, the older institution received a blow from which it never fully recovered. Williamsburg was a storm center in two wars in both of which the college suffered. Its buildings were burned while occupied by the French troops at the siege of Yorktown in 1781, and while occupied by the Federal troops in 1862. For seven years in the eighties the College of William and Mary was closed, but it has survived all vicissitudes.

Such was Jefferson's point of departure in developing his plan of public education which has since then become characteristically American. William and Mary was a colonial Oxford, under the control of the Established Church and founded primarily for the education of its clergy. Jefferson broke with the traditional idea of a university when he asked Virginia to establish a free and secular university, supported and controlled by the State. A committee headed by Jefferson met in the tavern at Rockfish Gap in the Blue Ridge Mountains on August 1, 1818, to draw up a plan for the "Central College" of Virginia and followed closely the idea which Jefferson had vainly urged seventeen years before and which since has been carried out in almost every State in the Union.

According to this plan each locality should maintain its own elementary schools for the education of every boy and girl. Secondary education should be given in various parts of the State in academies and colleges supported by the State or by tuition fees. This mixed system of public high schools and private schools and endowed colleges has served very satisfactorily to reconcile the demand for different kinds of training. At the top there was to be a State University in which was to be given the most advanced instruction in all branches of knowledge. This institution was to be situated in "an academical village," in buildings connected by corridors and surrounding a lawn. Jefferson's architectural plan for the University of Virginia involved the employment of two Italian sculptors to cut the capitals for the columns in classical forms.

The studies of the university were divided, according to the decimal fashion of the day, into ten groups "each of which are within the power of a single professor," as the Rockfish Gap commission said, though they evidently either overestimated the power of a professor or underestimated the future expansion of the subjects. The ten groups were: (1) Ancient Languages; (2) Modern Languages, including French, Spanish, Italian,

German, and Anglo-Saxon; (3) Mathematics; (4) Physico-mathematics; (5) Physics, including chemistry and mineralogy; (6) Botany and Zoölogy; (7) Anatomy and Medicine; (8) Government, Political Economy, and History; (9) Municipal Law; (10) Ideology, including rhetoric, ethics, belles-lettres and fine arts.

This curious curriculum shows the hand of Jefferson in both its inclusions and omissions. Anglo-Saxon was put among the modern languages because Jefferson held that its study would "recruit and renovate the vigor of the English language, too much impaired by the neglect of its ancient constitution and dialects." He argued that the adoption of phonetic spelling would restore the historic continuity of the language now obscured by the accidents of the conventional spelling.¹

Under "Ideology," a term introduced by Count Destutt de Tracy of the French Institute, Jefferson hoped for the development of a new philosophy free from the theological and metaphysical postulates of the old and leading toward a democratic instead of a monarchical ideal of society. This

¹ See Jefferson's *Essay toward facilitating instruction in Anglo-Saxon and Modern Dialects of the English Language for the use of the University of Virginia*.

ideal of Jefferson's has not yet been realized, although we may discern an approach toward it in the pragmatism of William James and John Dewey, hotly opposed in the monarchical countries of Europe because of its democratic implications.

The prominent place given to science in the Jeffersonian scheme was another novelty and excited popular hostility, particularly when Thomas Cooper, the first professor of chemistry chosen for the new university, was — not without reason — suspected of Unitarianism. The opposition to Cooper was indeed so strong that the call had to be canceled.¹

The unprecedented omission of the dominant department in the older universities, the theological, was thus explained by the Commission: "We have proposed no professor of Divinity. This will be within the province of the professor of Ethics. We have thought it proper at this point to leave any sects to provide as they think fittest the means of further instruction in their own peculiar tenets." This very sensible solution of the

¹ Jefferson's difficulties in getting a faculty for his university are told in lively fashion by W. P. Trent in a paper on *English Culture in Virginia*, in the Johns Hopkins Studies (1889). See also Herbert B. Adams's *Thomas Jefferson and the University of Virginia*, published by the U. S. Bureau of Education (1888).

denominational difficulty has not yet been carried out as fully as it might be. What Jefferson hoped for may be seen from a letter of his to Thomas Cooper: "I think the invitation will be accepted by some sects from candid intentions, and by others from jealousy and rivalry. And by bringing the rival sects together and mixing them with the mass of other students, we shall soften their asperities, liberalize and neutralize their prejudices, and make the general religion a religion of peace, reason, and morality."

But for the greater part of the nineteenth century "the rival sects" preferred to keep up a fight on the State Universities as "godless institutions," rather than attempt to supplement their deficiencies as Jefferson had suggested. Recently, however, some denominations have established residential halls or theological seminaries near to the State Universities and, by means of church clubs and student pastors, have sought to foster religious activities and study among the students.

Thomas Jefferson was chosen as the first Rector of the University of Virginia and held that position until his death in 1826. Many of the innovations that he introduced or encouraged at William and Mary or at the University of Virginia have been

widely adopted and now form part of the spirit of American education. To those already mentioned should be added the elective system and vocational specialization, for it was Jefferson's idea that the students should have "uncontrolled choice in the lectures they shall choose to attend, and give exclusive application to those branches only which are to qualify them for the particular vocations to which they are destined." The elective system, carried perhaps by George Ticknor to Harvard,¹ was extended under President Eliot's administration to all studies and has been in some degree adopted by all American universities and by most colleges. Along with this principle of freedom of learning and teaching, Jefferson also followed the German universities in their system of rotation in office. According to his plan the chief executive was elected annually from among the members of the faculty. But in this respect since his day the tide has set in the other direction, and as the universities have become more extensive and complex their administration has become less democratic. As it more clearly appeared that a university gained in numbers, wealth, and renown when it

¹ U. S. Bureau of Education, *Circular of Information*, No. 1, 1888, p. 127.

was under the leadership of a powerful personality, the tendency has been to concentrate the control in the hands of its president. Finally even the University of Virginia succumbed and, with a permanent president, has prospered unprecedentedly.

Jefferson desired to apply to the university the same theory that he advocated for the State — that the best government is the least government. He wished to do away with corporal punishment, espionage, and “useless observances which merely multiply occasions for dissatisfaction, disobedience, and revolt.” After Jefferson’s death, however, the student on matriculating had to sign an eight-page pamphlet of regulations and penalties. Small wonder that the consequent “disobedience and revolt” took the form of riots, in one of which a professor was shot.

But the honor system, which was adopted in 1842 and by which the student’s signed statement that he has received no assistance in his work is accepted without question, is decidedly Jeffersonian. It has been quite generally adopted, although it is not everywhere so successful as it is in institutions like Virginia and Princeton which have a homogeneous student body with a strong and unified public sentiment.

Jefferson did not wish to have the university confer any degrees, titles, or honors. A simple certificate of graduation specifying the subject to which the student had devoted most attention would, he believed, answer the purpose. But here his country has failed to follow him. Degrees have multiplied amazingly and the ceremonies of conferring them have developed an academic pomp that would shock the early apostle of democratic simplicity.

But no man can hope to make posterity adopt all his ideas. Jefferson was more fortunate than most in this respect. The three achievements in which he took most pride and which he wished to have engraved upon his tombstone are still regarded with reverence and gratitude by all Americans. Few men in history have had a grander monument than the unpretentious stone bearing the legend:

THOMAS JEFFERSON

AUTHOR

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CHAPTER VII

WASHINGTON AND NATIONAL EDUCATION

The time is therefore come when a plan of universal education ought to be adopted in the United States. — *George Washington* (1795).

IF Jefferson, the father of the party of State Rights, was content when he had founded the University of Virginia, it is clear that Washington, the leader of the Federalists, wanted nothing less than a national system of education. The dominant motive of both these statesmen was the same; the difference between them lay in the scope of their ideas. Jefferson wanted to unify the mind of the individual State; Washington, to unify the mind of the whole nation by educating the youth together. Both feared foreign influences: Washington, the evil influence of education in monarchical England; Jefferson, the evil influence of New England teachers and preachers. Jefferson, in one of his pessimistic moods, wrote to Joseph C. Cabell

that, unless Virginia established her own university, the State would have to send her children to Kentucky or to Massachusetts. If they went to Kentucky, they would stay there. If they went to Massachusetts, they would return fanatics and Tories.

If, however, we are to go a-begging any where for our education I would rather it should be to Kentucky than any other state because she has more of the flavor of the old cask than any other. All the states but our own are sensible that knowledge is power, . . . while we are sinking into the barbarism of our Indian aborigines and expect like them to oppose by ignorance the overwhelming mass of light and science by which we shall be surrounded. It is a comfort I am not to live to see this.

Washington's reasons for desiring a national university where youths from various parts of the country could complete their education in common are given in the following passage from his last will and testament:

It has always been a source of serious regret with me, to see the youth of these United States sent to foreign countries for the purpose of education, often before their minds were formed, or they had imbibed any adequate ideas of the happiness of their own; contracting too frequently, not only habits of dissipation and extravagance, but principles unfriendly to republican

government, and to the true and genuine liberties of mankind, which thereafter are rarely overcome; for these reasons it has been my ardent wish to see a plan devised on a liberal scale, which would have a tendency to spread systematic ideas through all parts of this rising empire, thereby to do away local attachments and State prejudices, as far as the nature of things would, or indeed ought to admit, from our national councils. Looking anxiously forward to the accomplishment of so desirable an object as this is (in my estimation), my mind has not been able to contemplate any plan more likely to effect the measure, than the establishment of a UNIVERSITY in a central part of the United States, to which the youths of fortune and talents from all parts thereof may be sent for the completion of their education, in all the branches of polite literature, in arts and sciences, in acquiring knowledge in the principles of politics and good government, and, as a matter of infinite importance in my judgment, by associating with each other, and forming friendships in juvenile years, be enabled to free themselves in a proper degree from those local prejudices and habitual jealousies which have just been mentioned, and which, when carried to excess, are never-failing sources of disquietude to the public mind, and pregnant of mischievous consequences to this country.

These words remind one of the will of that later empire builder, Cecil Rhodes, who left a legacy that picked young men from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa, the United States,

and Germany might be educated together at Oxford with a view of reducing national antagonisms and local prejudices.

That Washington cherished the idea even before the Revolutionary War is proved by a passage in Samuel Blodget's *Economica*:

As the most minute circumstances are sometimes instructing for their relation to great events, we relate the first that we ever heard of a national university: it was in the camp at Cambridge, in October, 1775, when Major William Blodget went to the quarters of General Washington to complain of the militia quartered therein. The writer of this being in company with his friend and relation, and hearing General Greene join in lamenting the then ruinous state of the eldest seminary of Massachusetts observed, *merely to console the company of friends*, that to make amends for these injuries, after our war, he hoped we should erect a noble national university, at which the youth of all the world might be proud to receive instructions. What was thus pleasantly said, Washington immediately replied to, with that inimitably expressive and truly interesting look for which he was sometimes so remarkable: "*Young man, you are a prophet! inspired to speak what I am confident will one day be realized.*"

Washington then detailed his plans for a federal city and university to be built near the falls of the Potomac, speaking with such force that Blodget was thoroughly converted and subsequently copy-

righted his *Economica* for the "benefit of the free education fund of the university founded by George Washington in his last years." This fund began with about \$25,000 in fifty shares in the Potomac River Navigation Company which Washington bequeathed to the Government for the purpose of founding a national university. These shares had been given to Washington by Virginia, together with a hundred shares in the James River Company, as a reward for his services in the Revolutionary War. The James River stock he gave to Liberty Hall Academy, a school in Virginia established by the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians because the College of William and Mary was too narrowly Episcopalian. Thus aided, Liberty Hall Academy developed into a college and later into a university which took the name of its benefactor. After the Civil War General Robert E. Lee became its president, and since his death the institution has been known as Washington and Lee University.

But although Washington showed his interest in the educational institutions of his native State by this endowment as well as by serving as chancellor of his Alma Mater, William and Mary, from 1788 until his death in 1799, he never relinquished his belief that national as well as State institutions

of learning were needed. In his first speech to Congress on January 8, 1790, Washington emphasized education as a national duty and suggested a university, and in his last speech to Congress he again called attention to the need of a national university and a military academy. Part of his intention has been satisfactorily carried out in the Military Academy at West Point on the Hudson and in the Naval Academy at Annapolis on Chesapeake Bay. Perhaps because Washington had been untrained in military science when he was called upon to lead the Continental Army against the most powerful nation in the world, he fully appreciated the value of such training. "The art of war," he declared, "is at once comprehensive and complicated; it demands much previous study," and he advocated preparedness by recommending to Congress that "however pacific the general policy of a nation may be, it ought never to be without an adequate stock of military knowledge for emergencies."

The Military Academy at West Point was definitely opened on July 4, 1802, by President Jefferson with ten cadets present. Since then it has been in continuous activity with the exception of the war year of 1812. It has furnished the regular

army with most of its officers in all American wars and further has given to the country many of its leading technicians and superintendents of public works, for it was, until the opening of the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1825, the only engineering school in the United States. West Point, during most of its existence, has received young men from each congressional district, and this distribution of students has made the American army a truly national and popular organization and has thus achieved one of the aims of Washington's ideal of education. When the United States entered the Great War young men of draft age who were not needed for immediate service were placed at Government expense in the universities of their choice and received intensive military and naval training under West Point officers, supplemented by lectures on the causes of the war and on technical subjects by instructors from the regular faculty. It is already apparent that the experience gained from this Student Army Training Corps is destined to modify American educational methods in the future.

In this way Washington's desire for military education has been realized. The other part of his idea, a national university, came near being carried

cut by the aid of Jefferson. In 1794 there arose an opportunity to import *en masse* a European university. The faculty of Geneva, feeling uncomfortable in the Swiss Republic, proposed to emigrate in a body to the United States if a place could be found for them. John Adams and Thomas Jefferson were much taken with the idea and urged it upon Washington in the hope of getting his Potomac shares for that purpose, but this scheme of wholesale importation did not fall in with Washington's notion. He preferred to pick his professors from various countries — for instance, a Scotchman rather than a Frenchman for philosophy — instead of bringing over a body of foreigners who would have to teach in French or Latin. So what might have proved an interesting experiment in transplanting education was never tried, and it will never be known whether the famous university would have prospered on the Potomac as it has on the Rhone.

Washington and Jefferson worked together on the educational problem with as much harmony as could be expected of men of such different temperaments. There is no necessary conflict between State and national education. The State Universities have fought hard for a national university

at Washington. In 1890 John W. Hoyt, first President of the University of Wyoming, revived the agitation. President Andrew D. White of Cornell, President Edmund J. James of Illinois, and other equally prominent educators have worked for such an institution. It has been endorsed by the National Association of State Universities and by the National Educational Association. The legislatures of Western States have petitioned for it. Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, John Quincy Adams, Grant, Hayes, and later Presidents have urged it upon Congress, and Committees of the Senate and House have reported favorably. But, as President James of Illinois remarked: "Private institutions, religious and secular, have opposed, thus far successfully, the movement." Western opinion has been disposed to ascribe this opposition to the Eastern universities, which grew out of colleges modeled after the private schools of England. The West drew its inspiration from German and French sources and has come to regard all education, from the elementary to the graduate school, as a public function. From this point of view the educational system appears to need a national university to complete its symmetry.

A dream may be fulfilled in various ways. The national university foreseen by Washington is still in the future. But the large endowed universities in the East fulfill Washington's ideal by drawing together students from all parts of the United States. The proportion of American students now going abroad for their education is not great enough to endanger the national ideals. Furthermore the Federal Government is carrying on many of the functions of such an institution in a way that would have pleased Washington and shocked Jefferson. Some sixty million dollars of national funds are now appropriated annually for agricultural education and experimentation, for the naval and military academies, for Indian schools, and for departments that are largely occupied with scientific research and the diffusion of knowledge, such as the Bureaus of Education, Ethnology, Mines, Fisheries, Standards, the Library of Congress, Naval Observatory, Public Health Service, National Museum, Zoölogical Park, Smithsonian Institution, and the Coast and Geodetic Survey.

CHAPTER VIII

SCHOOLS OF THE YOUNG REPUBLIC

Be it remembered that Uncle Sam is an undoubted friend of public education, although so sadly deficient in his own. . . . It was, therefore, democratically believed, and loudly insisted on, that as the State had freely received, it should freely give; and that "larnin, even the most powerfulest highest larnin," should at once be bestowed on everybody! and without a farthing's expense! — *Baynard Rush Hall (1824)*.

It is impossible to understand anything about the American schools of the early half of the nineteenth century without bearing in mind the political conditions and ideals which determined their organization, standard, course of study, equipment, textbooks, and administration. The political revolution which abolished the colonial tie with Great Britain abolished also the colonial habit of mind and forced the American people henceforth to find in their own institutions the stimulus to popular education instead of depending upon the example of the mother country.

The still more important peaceful revolution

which subsequently abolished property qualifications for the suffrage in the various States and made most offices within the gift of the people directly elective had also an influence on the schools of America. In the first place, it gave a stimulus to the ideal of universal education, because, if all men were to be voters, the commonwealth must see that all children were instructed, unless it desired that illiterates should direct the destinies of the nation. Public schools, desirable in colonial days, became imperative in a wholly self-governing democracy. Another by-product of democracy, less of an unmixed blessing than the sentiment in favor of universal education, was the district school system, which originated in Massachusetts and Connecticut and was copied in most of the States of the Union. A "district" was the neighborhood around a public school, and there were usually several such districts in each "town," although some towns were never subdivided. The school district is the smallest and therefore, from a democratic standpoint, the most important of political divisions. Its size is determined by the length of the children's legs, for it must be within walking distance of most of the pupils, not much over a mile. The school district averaged about

four square miles in area, and the number of pupils ranged from half a dozen to fifty or more. As the means of transportation improved, the district expanded into the township and county with State supervision and national aid, until now we have rural county high schools to which the pupils are brought in free motor omnibuses. The money raised by the town school tax was distributed among the districts in various ways — according to the population, the number of children of school age, or the amount paid by the district in taxes, or on a basis of equality. In 1827 a Massachusetts law empowered district committeemen to care for the school property and select the teacher. This act, according to one writer, represented “the high-water mark of modern democracy, and the low-water mark of the public school system.” It meant the passing of school control from the expert and the official to the parent and the neighbor.

The faults of the district school system are obvious. If a self-made man has a hard struggle to get an education, so has a self-made community. Nothing could be introduced into the curriculum that the district did not regard as “practical,” and this usually meant only the three R’s and spelling, grammar, and geography. Novel methods were

viewed with as much dislike as new studies, and new text-books were regarded as out of the question until the old ones had been worn out by decades of continuous use. To save the cost of a skilled teacher's wages, the district commonly hired, without regard to other considerations, the cheapest person who could produce a certificate, unless some man powerful in local politics had a relative for whom he desired the place. The very districts that needed good schools most were from their ignorance least conscious of the need. As a result the progressive districts raised the level of public instruction from generation to generation, while the schools in other districts went from bad to worse. This contrast was most marked in States where there was no general system of supervision. In Delaware, for example, an educational convention declared in 1843 that "the school of every district is in the power of its school voters; they can have as good a school as they please, or an inferior school, or no school."

According to modern standards the school equipment of those days was usually unspeakably bad. The schoolhouse was the same sort of wooden box which had done duty in colonial times; there was the same lack of globes, maps, pictures,

blackboards, and decorations; there were the same congested wooden benches; the same red hot stove kept the pupils in the front benches overheated while the children in the back of the room were shivering in the draft from the window — sometimes broken but never open. One change there was: slates came into general use after the Revolutionary War and became ideal instruments for formal exercises in arithmetic and quite informal ventures in portraiture.

The harsh school discipline known to tradition was long retained in most American communities, even after some European countries had largely abandoned the rod in favor of milder measures. But the teacher was not wholly to blame for this conservatism. The American boy began the practice of liberty and equality rather too early in life for the peace of mind of the old-time pedagogue. The strict bonds of social custom and an early training in reverence for rank and place made obedience natural to the German child and even to the boy of seventeenth century Massachusetts. But deference and decorum were not the cardinal virtues of American democracy in the days of Jackson. In certain of the frontier settlements no teacher was secure of his place until he had

knocked down three or four overgrown, mischief-loving lads who had challenged his authority. Sometimes an unpopular teacher would find his schoolroom door barred, or the chimney stopped up, or an impromptu holiday enforced in some other ingenious fashion. Those who criticize the rule of the rod in the district school of a past generation sometimes forget with what conditions the teacher then had to contend.

The best feature of the district system was not its influence on the children but its effect on the community. In other countries the public school has been regarded as a benevolent institution run by some far-off entity, the state, and the private school has been looked upon as a convenient place to send the son or daughter who was in the way at home. But the American public schools stood not only for education *of* the people but for education *by* the people. The very fact that the school stood on no higher level than the people it reached robbed education of that touch of aloofness and conscious condescension always irritating to the uneducated man who has instruction imposed upon him or his children. The election of a school board, the choice of a new teacher, the ceremonies of "quarter days" and commencements, were red-letter

occasions to the village or farming region which supported the local school.

The early schoolhouse served also as a sort of community center — a “meeting-house” for church services, for political assemblies, and for “sociables.” Here the community gathered for any corporate action, and the women naturally took part in the deliberations as well as the men. Out of this school meeting grew the more complex political organization of the community, still preserving some of its original characteristics. Thus we find that women voted at school elections in many States long before they could vote for President.

In the pioneer country school the pupils ranged from A B C children to girls who had been three times through the arithmetic or boys who were being coached for college, while the spelling-bees, singing-schools, and debating societies constituted what might be called the “extension department” of the country school. Parents visited the school at every convenient opportunity to see with their own eyes how their money was being spent and how their children were getting along. The spelling-bee was not a mere drill to impress certain facts upon the plastic memory of youth. It was also one of the recreations of adult life, if recreation be the

right word for what was taken so seriously by every one. The spectacle of a school trustee standing with a blue-backed Webster open in his hand while gray-haired men and women, one row being captained by the schoolmaster and the rival team by the minister, spelled each other down is one that it would be hard to reproduce under a more centralized and less immediately popular form of school government.

Secondary education in America has undergone a curious development. During the colonial period the Latin grammar school dominated instruction beyond the primary grades, whereas in our time the public high school is the leading type. Both these institutions were public. But for a long period, which may roughly be indicated as lying between the Revolution and the Civil War, the Latin Grammar school remained as a survival of another age while the high school was gradually beginning to assume its place as part of the educational system of the nation. The private academy meanwhile provided the link between elementary school and college.

The academy, the name of which is taken from the Athenian groves where Plato walked and

talked with his pupils, was developed in England in the seventeenth century to meet the needs of the nonconformists, who were not allowed to graduate at Oxford and Cambridge. The earliest American academies were also substitutes for college rather than preparatory schools for college. The first American academy to bear the name was chartered at Philadelphia in 1753 and became in later years the University of Pennsylvania. The Phillips Academies at Andover, Massachusetts, and at Exeter, New Hampshire, on the other hand remained secondary institutions; and still others became "finishing schools" for those who required a rapid rounding off and polishing of their education.

The great merit of the academies lay in adding breadth and variety to the course of study. The old Latin schools which they had largely displaced taught little but the classics and taught them as grammar rather than as literature. But in the early years of the nineteenth century an academy would offer "all the branches of English, classical, mathematical, and philosophical literature which are taught in the universities, together with the French language if required." The girls' academies — usually known by the atrocious title of "female seminaries" — went even further and

taught many subjects which no college of the day would have dreamed of providing any more than it would of admitting the girls themselves. In addition to rhetoric, elocution, history, logic, philosophy, grammar, spelling, Latin, French, astronomy, and geography "with the use of the globes," the female seminaries gave instruction in needlework, drawing, painting, fancy embroidery, and music. In the latter half of the century girls were particularly fond of botany, which consisted at first chiefly in gathering and pressing flowers and in running down their scientific names by means of the key in Gray or Wood. Boys were afforded an opportunity to study such practical branches as surveying and bookkeeping.

Such opportunities for obtaining pleasant and perhaps profitable learning as the academies offered did not leave the community indifferent. In Massachusetts there were 112 academies chartered by 1840, although a few of these existed only on paper. In Virginia at the opening of the Civil War there were thirteen thousand pupils enrolled in the academies of the State. Some academies maintained the highest standards of scholarship. Others were mere catch-penny enterprises that grew rich by retailing appetizing "extras," such

as instruction in Italian or in some special variety of decorative art. Many academies, including those attended by girls, were practically normal schools and offered the best training then available for those who intended to become teachers. On the whole, America owes much to the academy. It gave to many thousand young men and women an introduction to art, science, literature, and philosophy that proved an inspiration to a life from which these elements would otherwise have been lacking. By its emphasis on the study of the English language the academy had much to do with making this a nation of fluent speakers and ready writers. Even its worst feature, the overcrowded curriculum, helped by its very multiplicity to introduce the elective idea into secondary education.

As private institutions the academies, though frequently subsidized from the "school fund" or "literary fund" of the State, were supported in part by students' fees. This arrangement, however, restricted secondary education to those who could afford to pay tuition and was felt to be undemocratic. Moreover, after the establishment of the State Universities, it was considered inconsistent for the public to charge itself with the teaching of children in the elementary schools and of

men and women in the colleges while leaving the intermediate years wholly to private enterprise and benevolence. Somehow or other the State should provide free secondary education. The solution was finally reached in the establishment of the high school.

Again Boston took the lead in a new educational movement. The English Classical School for Boys was opened in 1821 as an alternative to the old Latin Grammar school with its rigid and narrow course of study. Five years later a high school for girls was started in the same city. In 1826 the Massachusetts Legislature passed a law requiring townships of five hundred or more households to provide instruction in American history, book-keeping, geometry, surveying, and algebra. Thus there was established a system of high schools in the important towns of the State, although some towns evaded the requirement as long as they were able to do so. High schools were also started in New York and Philadelphia soon after the Boston experiment and independently of it.

The academies looked upon the high schools as intruders and upon the new system as a socialistic invasion of the field of private enterprise. The taxpayers in many places objected to paying for

the education of other people's children beyond the elementary branches, and it was only through a maze of legal controversies that the high schools finally forced their way to public recognition and approval. After the Civil War the high schools increased very rapidly in numbers in all parts of the country until now they form an ineradicable and perhaps the most characteristic part of the American educational system.

In the chief educational systems of Europe the secondary school is not placed on top of an eight years' course in the elementary school but runs parallel to it above the primary grades, very much as our colonial Latin schools used to do. The German father, for example, who is ambitious for his son's career, transfers him at the end of three or four years from the elementary school to some school which will fit him for future success in industry or commerce or will prepare him after nine years' study for the university. Each social class has its own type of school leading to a goal certain and definite from the start. But in the United States a secondary school has a double function: it must with the same curriculum prepare some of its students for higher education, but it must also prepare others for a life in which they may have

no further formal schooling. That is why the high schools repeat much of the work of the elementary schools, why the colleges give courses already included in the high school, and why there is an endless conflict between the colleges and the secondary schools as to the requirements for admission to the former. It is the price that Americans pay for their insistence that the children of the well-to-do shall be educated together with the children of the poor. Perhaps the social gain in the development of democratic sentiment is worth the educational loss in delaying the entrance to college of those who reach it by way of "the grades."

The introduction of text-books which were neither imported from English publishing houses nor written in close imitation of trans-Atlantic models became a potent factor in Americanizing the school. Of these the works of Noah Webster were perhaps the most widely influential in molding the ideas of the first generations of children born under the flag of the Republic. Webster's famous speller was the offspring of the necessity of the Revolutionary War. "In the year 1782," wrote the author, "while the American army was lying on the banks of the Hudson I kept a classical school at Goshen, N. Y. The country was

impoverished: intercourse with Great Britain was interrupted, and schoolbooks were scarce and hardly attainable." His *Grammatical Institute of the English Language*, published the following year, was a combined reader, spelling-book, and grammar. The sale of the speller supplied him with enough to live on while he worked on his dictionary. He brought out in 1806 the first edition of the dictionary and in 1828 appeared the work that became universally known as *Webster's Unabridged*. There had been not a few text-book writers in the colonies but none had ventured so boldly upon innovations nor emphasized the patriotic motive so constantly. His enemies have charged Noah Webster with creating an American language distinct from English, by simplifying English spelling and recognizing changes in pronunciation. His friends replied that but for the use of his books by schools in every part of the country the nation might have been divided by dialects and there would have been not one American language but a dozen.

There can certainly be no question as to the nature of Webster's intentions or the extent of his influence. The aim of his speller was, he said, "to diffuse an uniformity and purity of language in

America, to destroy the provincial prejudices that originate in the trifling difference of dialect and produce reciprocal ridicule." In the advertisement to his reader he declared: "I consider it a culpable fault in our books that the books generally used contain subjects wholly uninteresting to our youth; while the writings which marked the Revolution, which are, perhaps, not inferior to the orations of Cicero and Demosthenes, and which are calculated to impress interesting truths upon young minds, lie neglected and forgotten." By 1818 Webster's speller alone had sold over five million copies; by 1847, twenty-four million. Its total sales by this time probably exceed seventy-five million and it is still selling by the hundred thousand a year in spite of a thousand competitors which have sprung up since its publication.

The same patriotic purpose was evident in the geographies of Jedediah Morse and his contemporaries. Geography a hundred years ago did not have the narrow and special meaning now attached to it; it covered all sorts of information which it was thought interesting or useful for the child to know. According to an announcement of the time, a good geography would give an account of the

“religion, military strength, literature, curiosities, constitution, and history” of every country in the world. The United States received due consideration, nor was the author ashamed to make its place a high one. Of the Americans he remarked that “the people generally are enterprising, industrious, persevering, and submissive to government. They are also intelligent, brave, active, and benevolent, and possess a strength and agility of body which are seldom united in so great a degree. . . . Upon the whole, the manners of the people of the United States . . . are, probably, a medium between an honest bluntness on the one hand, and a sickly delicacy on the other.”¹ The same author goes on to speak of “the present manly ease of freemen,” a quality to which Dickens and other European travelers preferred to give a different name.

When the South attempted to establish its Confederacy, it declared at the same time its independence of the New England text-book. There was, for example, *A Geography for Beginners*, published in 1864 by the Reverend K. J. Stewart, which included maps showing the Confederate States of

¹ *A History of the United States of America*, by Chauncey A. Goodrich (1833), p. 523.

America and special articles on such topics as the flora and the scenery of the Confederate States. It shows little trace of the passions of the Civil War then raging, but it comments with amusing sharpness on the patronizing attitude adopted by Europeans to Americans of both North and South. Speaking of the upper classes of Great Britain, the author remarks that, "as a class of men, they are superior to any similar class of other nations, unless it be among men of the same race in the States of America, who, with the exception of titles, resemble them very much, and are not at all their inferiors."

In considering the factors which gave the young republic a culture which affected all classes to a more uniform degree than was the case of any other civilized country of the time, the press must be regarded as the most important of text-books. This was recognized as early as 1740 by John Clarke in an *Essay upon the Education of Youth in Grammar Schools* in which he advocated the teaching of geography and history in addition to the classics. "By that time boys are fit to be entered in *Greek* or sooner," said he, "it may be convenient to bring them acquainted with the Public News, by making them read the *Evening Post* or some

other *newspaper* constantly. These the master may at first read along with them, explaining, as occasion offers, the Terms of War, and whatever else he apprehends they do not understand." This was an anticipation of one of the most recent innovations in teaching. At the present time millions of copies of dailies, weeklies, and monthlies are used in American classrooms in the study of current events, civics, and history. Yet then, as to-day, there were critics of American journalism and its influence. One writer held that American mediocrity was due to "the unequaled circulation of newspapers and magazines of every possible description, as well as the variety and profusion of other productions that come daily and hourly reeking from the press,"¹ and drew the pessimistic inference that "in proportion as the facilities of learning and means of investigation are multiplied, in the same degree men seem to lose sight of more noble pursuits, and become continually more absorbed in those which only call into exercise their meaner faculties." The truth seems to have been about half-way between this harsh censure and the spread-eagleism of the writer of patriotic

¹ *Causes of the Backward State of Sound Learning of the United States*, by Charles H. Lyon (1838).

geographies. But all observers admitted the fact that no social class was so high or so low as to be outside the influence of the little red schoolhouse, the blue-backed speller, and the newspaper.

CHAPTER IX

HORACE MANN AND THE AMERICAN SCHOOL

Horace Mann is by general consent the greatest educator that this western hemisphere has produced. — *A. E. Winship.*

HORACE MANN was the type of leader who so stamps his personality upon a great movement of reform that no one can think of it apart from him. He spent but a comparatively short period of his life in the actual work of teaching and, unlike such educational pioneers as Rousseau or Pestalozzi, he contributed no new theory or method to the science of pedagogy. Sometimes the need of the age is for a man of boundless energy, enthusiasm, and consecration who can make millions of men heed the truths already discerned by a small circle of special students. Horace Mann was the instigator, the promoter, one might almost say the press agent, of modern ideals of education.

Horace Mann was born in 1796 at Franklin, Massachusetts, and dug the only really valuable

part of his early education out of the books in the town library founded by Benjamin Franklin. Fortunately for him a private schoolmaster, Samuel Barrett, took an interest in the lad and encouraged him to go to college. Within six months he learned enough Latin and Greek to enter the sophomore class of Brown University, although up to that time he had never studied either language. This furious cramming, however, injured his health and compelled him to work for the rest of his life under a physical handicap. Indeed, it was always the habit of Mann to plunge into a task with a reckless fury that left his nerves and his temper in rags by the time the work was completed. "Work," he once said, "has always been to me what water is to a fish. I have wondered a thousand times to hear people say, 'I don't like this business'; or, 'I wish I could exchange for that'; for with me, whenever I have had anything to do, I do not remember ever to have demurred, but have always set about it like a fatalist; and it was as sure to be done as the sun is to set."

After Horace Mann graduated from college, he remained for a short time as a tutor at Brown and then took up the study of law. He outdistanced his fellow lawyers by the same grim intensity of

effort that had awed his instructors in college, and in 1827 he entered the Massachusetts Legislature. A clear pathway to political fame lay before him, the more so as he had the gift of oratory which was then valued above all others as a key to public honors. Had his career not been deflected into other channels, Massachusetts might have had in him another Webster or another Sumner, though it is safe to say that as a statesman he would have been less of an opportunist than the former and of more balanced judgment than the latter. But in 1837, when President of the State Senate, he resigned all his political prospects to accept the post of secretary to the newly created State Board of Education.

It is hard to say whether the friends of Horace Mann or the friends of the Board of Education were the more surprised and disappointed at his action. Horace Mann's friends, with few exceptions, tried to dissuade him from taking this humble office. To some who said that the position of Secretary to the Board was not one of sufficient dignity, he replied: "If the title is not sufficiently honorable now, then it is clearly left for me to elevate it; and I had rather be creditor than debtor to the title." Others, more practical, urged that it

was sheer madness for one of the best lawyers of Massachusetts to give his whole time in exchange for a beggarly \$1500 a year. "Well, one thing is certain," said Mann. "If I live, and have health, I will be revenged on them; I will do them more than \$1500 worth of good."

On the other hand, some were displeased that Horace Mann had been selected for the office. They had nothing to say against him personally, except that he was not an educator by profession, but in their hearts they had hoped that James G. Carter, whose untiring devotion had established the principle of State supervision in Massachusetts, would become Secretary of the Board of Education which he had virtually created. But Mann, who as a member of the Legislature had already shown much interest in legislation affecting the schools, took his new duties very seriously and read as much as he could on educational theory in the intervals of his practical work.

The chief duty of the Secretary of the Board of Education at that time was to prepare an annual report on the schools of Massachusetts for the information of the Board and the Legislature. Merely the routine work of compiling an abstract of school returns was enough to keep one person

fairly busy, but Mann resolved to make each report also a battle in the campaign for more adequate teaching. His particular target was the district system of school government, and his criticisms did more than anything else to arouse the country to the need of central supervision of the local schools.

In addition to preparing the twelve reports which he issued as Secretary, Mann aroused public interest in educational problems by lectures before teachers' conventions and public meetings of all sorts. He toured every part of the State, arousing and inspiring teachers with a sense of the opportunities before them for accomplishing great and enduring work. With the same object of elevating the teacher's occupation he established the *Common School Journal* and encouraged the organization of teachers' institutes.

Even more significant was Horace Mann's work in behalf of teachers' training. In 1838 Edmund Dwight, a friend of Horace Mann, offered ten thousand dollars towards a normal school on condition that the Massachusetts Legislature would vote an equal sum. In the following year the first public normal school in America was opened at Lexington. Cyrus Pierce of Nantucket, who was

selected by Mann for its principal, bravely undertook the new work, although at first only three students were in attendance. From such small beginnings grew the normal school system of the United States which now controls the standards of teaching throughout the country. But the voters viewed this innovation with a certain distrust. It was then generally held that anybody who knew a fact could teach it, or that at least he could learn how to do so in the course of practice. The men of that generation were not perhaps altogether wrong in thinking that teaching was the best school for a teacher, but Horace Mann and his fellow reformers thought it wasteful to sacrifice the interests of the children in order that the schoolmaster might acquire through experience some inklings of the mistakes to avoid and the best methods to follow.

Another innovation introduced by Horace Mann was the teaching of music in public schools. Private instruction in singing and piano playing was, of course, nothing new, but it was something of an achievement to convince the taxpayer that public funds should be used for instruction in anything so far removed from the "practical." All that Mann was able to contribute to the movement

for adding music to the course of study was his encouragement and championship, his influence with the authorities and the general public. The actual organization of musical teaching was due to his friend Lowell Mason, whose name is still remembered with gratitude by all lovers of music. "It is well worth walking ten miles to hear a lesson by Lowell Mason," said Horace Mann, and he saw to it that the teachers in the normal schools and institutes had the benefit of Mason's inspiring instruction.

Horace Mann's attempts to introduce reforms into common school education and his unsparing attacks on existing conditions made enemies as well as friends. But it was not until the publication of his seventh report, in 1843, that the murmurs of conservative criticism swelled to a storm. The charge brought against him was lack of patriotism because he held up European schools, particularly those of Germany, as models for America. Much unsympathetic European criticism had made the young republic somewhat sensitive to comparisons drawn between the old world and the new unless they were wholly favorable. The men of Massachusetts were particularly proud of their schools, which had a long and

honorable tradition behind them and were still perhaps the best in the United States, and they were therefore little inclined to take hints from foreigners. Horace Mann well understood this sensitiveness, and he therefore attempted to forestall hostile criticism by remarking in his report: "Wherever I have found the best institutions . . . there I have always found the greatest desire to know how similar institutions were administered among ourselves; and, where I have found the worst, there I have found most of the spirit of self-complacency, and even an offensive disinclination to hear of better methods."

In order to gather the materials for his annual report Horace Mann took a five months' "vacation." This he spent in studying foreign schools and philanthropic institutions, about which he prepared a veritable encyclopedia of facts. During that brief interval he "visited England, Ireland, and Scotland; crossed the German Ocean to Hamburg; thence went to Magdeburg, Berlin, Potsdam, Halle, and Weissenfels, in the Kingdom of Prussia; to Leipsic and Dresden . . . thence to Erfurt, Weimar, Eisenach . . . thence to the Grand Duchy of Nassau, of Hesse-Darmstadt, and of Baden; and, after visiting all the principal cities

in the Rhenish Provinces of Prussia, passed through Holland and Belgium to Paris."

Of all the schools which he visited while abroad Horace Mann found the Prussian schools the best. In the first place, the system of administration was sound. Attendance was compulsory and rigidly enforced; the schools were carefully graded, and each teacher had but one class in his room; the school inspectors were men of the type who in this country would be judges or college presidents; and each teacher received a thorough professional training. He noticed, also, improved methods of instruction. Reading was taught by the "word method" instead of by requiring the children first to learn the alphabet, then to combine letters in syllables, and finally to build up words from these elements, according to the usual American practice. Foreign languages were taught by being used in the classroom; geography and nature study were presented in a way that children could comprehend; and drawing was begun as early as writing.

All these minor perfections, however, mattered little to him by comparison with the fine sympathy between teacher and pupil and the cordial delight which the teacher took in his work. The classroom was a place alive with activity. In Prussia, as also

in Saxony and Scotland, Mann said, no teacher could hold his place unless he had the power to interest the children and attract their attention at all times. Speaking of his travels in Prussia and Saxony, he remarked:

1. During all this time, I never saw a teacher hearing a lesson of any kind (except a reading or spelling lesson) *with a book in his hand*.
2. I never saw a teacher *sitting* while hearing a recitation.
3. Though I saw hundreds of schools, and thousands — I think I may say, within bounds, tens of thousands — of pupils, *I never saw one child undergoing punishment, or arraigned for misconduct*.

Although Horace Mann mingled his praise of foreign schools with abundant criticism, a committee of thirty-one Boston grammar school teachers, conceiving that he had insulted the Massachusetts school system, prepared an elaborate attack on his report. They accused Mann of ignorance of the schools of his own State and of neglecting his duties of inspection to follow his hobbies and impractical theories. They defended the use of corporal punishment, the old-fashioned method of teaching children to read, and most of the other practices of which he had spoken with disapproval. They objected chiefly to his insist-

ence on keeping the children interested in their studies, because, in their opinion, unless a child learned to work at dull or distasteful tasks "mental discipline" would be lost.

These remarks on his report, and especially the offensive and deliberately insulting language in which they were couched, so infuriated Mann that he replied in another pamphlet which fairly flamed with indignation that helpless children should have such stupid instructors. To this *Reply* to the *Remarks* on his *Report* there came a *Rejoinder*, and to that again an *Answer*. It is not worth while following the long drawn out controversy further than to say that Mann's superiority as a debater was as evident throughout as his superior wisdom in educational matters. He not only was the victor, but the whole country was aware of it.

In 1848 Horace Mann left his post. During the twelve years he was Secretary to the Board of Education the appropriation for public schools in the State had doubled; two million dollars had been spent to improve school buildings; the salaries of teachers were increased by more than half; a month was added to the ordinary length of the school year; and three flourishing normal schools were founded. As a token of public appreciation,

the Massachusetts Legislature voted Horace Mann a special compensation of two thousand dollars above his salary and also gave him a formal vote of thanks for the efficient manner in which he had filled the post of Secretary. During the same year he was elected to Congress from the constituency which had been represented by ex-President John Quincy Adams. His chief interest in the House of Representatives was the anti-slavery cause, and his political career is most widely known by his quarrel with Daniel Webster and the other conservative Whigs who were willing to compromise with the slavery interest.

For the second time in his life Mann abandoned politics for education. After serving two terms in Congress he became President of Antioch College in Ohio and carried into the West the same message of educational reform that he had preached in Massachusetts. Antioch was one of the earliest experiments in higher education for both men and women and for students of all races. But the college did not greatly prosper, chiefly for lack of financial backing, and Horace Mann's death in 1859 was hastened by overwork and worry.

Like all the great New Englanders of his generation, Horace Mann had many enthusiasms which

those who did not share them called fads. He hated with an equal hatred ignorance, slavery, drink, tobacco, war, and Calvinism. He believed firmly in phrenology. He was as interested in institutions for the insane, the blind, the deaf, and the criminal as he was in schools for normal children. In a word, he was a universal educational reformer dominated at every moment of his life by a sleepless conscience. He was no fanatic — or, more exactly, he was the most formidable kind of fanatic, for he could wait as well as strike. Wendell Phillips denounced him for not joining the extreme abolitionists, and Theodore Parker accused him of concealing his Unitarian beliefs from his orthodox associates at Antioch. Parker remarked that Horace Mann did not know that in morals as well as in mathematics a straight line is the shortest distance between two points; but some of us would agree rather with Mann that the longest way around is frequently the shortest way home.

Horace Mann was but one of the educational leaders of his day, and there is a limit to what one man, even the busiest, can accomplish. His real importance lies in his relation to other men whom he inspired to carry on and extend his task of

reforming the schools. The excellent public schools of far-away Argentina, for instance, owe much to the fact that President Sarmiento had studied the work of Horace Mann during his travels in the United States. Sometimes, indeed, Sarmiento is spoken of as "the Horace Mann of South America." There is no more striking proof of the extent of Mann's influence than the number of persons who have been labeled "the Horace Mann of" whatever place may have been the scene of their labors. It is the usual biographer's distinguishing tag for a prominent American educator, just as people speak of "the Belgian Shakespeare" or "the Danish Shakespeare" in paying a supreme tribute to a man of letters.

The man whose career most closely parallels that of Horace Mann and whose achievements were of at least equal importance in themselves, though not perhaps so widely influential, was Henry Barnard. After graduating at Yale, he traveled abroad and studied the schools of Germany and Switzerland. Upon his return to America he was elected to the Connecticut Legislature, as Horace Mann was elected to that of Massachusetts. Like Mann, again, he deserted law and politics to become Secretary of the State Board of

Education. While occupying this position he organized the first teachers' institutes held in America and edited the *Connecticut Common School Journal*. Rhode Island also owes a debt of gratitude to Barnard. The Connecticut Legislature in a moment of reaction abolished the Board of Education (or, as it was called, the Board of Commissioners of Common Schools) and thus Henry Barnard lost his position. Rhode Island seized the opportunity to obtain his services to organize its public schools. Repentant Connecticut soon recalled him to his old position but not before he had worked a revolution in the Rhode Island school system. Like Horace Mann, he spent some years in the Middle West. For two years he was Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin and, while there, did much to organize training for teachers throughout that State. After serving the cause of education in Connecticut, Rhode Island, Wisconsin, and Maryland, where he was President of St. John's College at Annapolis, Barnard became the first United States Commissioner of Education.

The great achievement of Henry Barnard, however, lay not in administration but in authorship. For more than thirty years he was editor of *The American Journal of Education*, which was really a

serial encyclopedia of educational theory and practice. In it were included a large proportion of the most important articles and monographs ever written about education. But the expense of the undertaking was so great that Barnard, after losing more than \$40,000 on it, was compelled to abandon it, and the costly plates would have been melted into type metal if William T. Harris had not organized a corporation to save the series.

The work accomplished by Horace Mann in Massachusetts and by Henry Barnard in Connecticut and Rhode Island was typical of that done by hundreds of other men of the same generation who served the interests of education not as teachers but as the statesmen of the schools. It was an age when the expert, the superintendent, the administrator first found a distinctive place in the common task of combating ignorance. The individual commander, such as the college president or school principal, was now aided by a "general staff" or boards of education, school inspectors, and normal school directors. Many a small boy sitting in a bright, well-aired, warm room at his individual desk, with an attractively illustrated geography open before him, and pleasant memories of the school garden or the camera club in his

thoughts, owes the best features of his education not to his teacher but to some busy superintendent who could not have made a success in teaching even a district school but who could and did devote his life to perfecting the school system. The best of these men, however, like Horace Mann, never made the machinery of education an end in itself, but kept steadily in mind the boys and girls for whose benefit it was all called into being.

CHAPTER X

DE WITT CLINTON AND THE FREE SCHOOL

Ten years of the life of a child may now be spent in a common school. In two years the elements of instruction may be acquired and the remaining eight years must now be spent in repetition or idleness, unless the teachers of the common schools are competent to instruct in the higher branches of knowledge. The outlines of geography, algebra, mineralogy, agriculture, chemistry, mechanical philosophy, surveying, geometry, astronomy, political economy and ethics might be communicated by able preceptors without essential interference with the calls of domestic industry. — *De Witt Clinton.*

MASSACHUSETTS is typical of those States which, having a democratic system of public instruction, sought to make it efficient; New York is a good example of those States which, having a system of public instruction that recognized class distinctions, sought to make it democratic. In New England the chief battleground was the question of expert supervision over the district school; in the Middle Atlantic States and in some parts of the South the great issue was the abolition of the distinction between “pay” pupils and

those who, by a kind of charity, were given their tuition free.

Of course, the question of expert supervision has also been an important one in New York, but in one sense it may be said that the supervision was older than the schools. Nowhere in America had the Revolutionary War more thoroughly unsettled what little had been accomplished for the younger generation in colonial days. True public schools did not exist, although a few parish schools and academies had weathered the stormy time, and even King's College, with its honorable record of public service, was forced to close its doors for several years. The revival of education under the republic began at the top. In 1784 King's College was reopened under the name of Columbia and was made the center of a State educational system. Young De Witt Clinton was the first student matriculated in Columbia College, and he graduated in 1786 with the first class to receive degrees from the institution.

By the act of 1784 a "University of the State of New York" was created. This was not a university in the American sense of a single institution, but in the French sense of a governing body placed over all the colleges and schools that might be es-

tablished. A Board of Regents was "empowered to found Schools and Colleges in any such part of the State as may seem expedient to them and to endow the same . . . directing the manner in which such Colleges are to be governed." Georgia had already founded a "university" of this type and Michigan (when still a Territory) later experimented even more boldly on the same lines. But the systematic organization of all schools into a "university" has not been widely adopted in the United States and is nowhere fully carried out. Even in New York, the Regents at first confined their attention largely to Columbia College and permitted the lesser schools to shift for themselves.

Governor George Clinton, uncle of De Witt Clinton, did not find the educational situation satisfactory. He praised the good work done by the private academies but, as he told the Legislature, "it cannot be denied that they are principally confined to the children of the opulent," and he recommended the establishment of public schools throughout the State. The legislators somewhat unwillingly untied the public purse strings and granted an annual appropriation to aid towns which started common schools. After five years the plan was abandoned, but in 1812 a new law

established a general system of public schools under a State Superintendent, which was in part supported by local tax, in part by State aid, and in part from "rate bills" on the parents whose children attended the schools.

In 1805, before the final establishment of a general school system for the State, a number of public-spirited citizens of New York City organized a Free School Society to care for the poor children who had no other means of education. In this thriving city of more than seventy-five thousand persons, thousands of children were growing up without any instruction because they could not pay to enter the private schools and because their parents did not wish to send them to the charity schools maintained by some of the churches. The schools founded by the Society were, barring one very brief and unhappy trial of the rate bill, free to all children and not bound to any creed, but their control remained in the hands of the Trustees of the Society. For nearly half a century the education of the children of the most important city in America was in charge of a private corporation.

The Free School Society, later known as the Public School Society, was the masterpiece of De Witt Clinton. He was the first President of its

Board of Trustees and he was the largest subscriber towards its objects. While a member of the New York Legislature he obtained an appropriation for the Society and opposed all attempts to scatter among church schools the share which belonged to New York City. No one knew better than Clinton that the citizens should support and control their own schools; but New York was not yet awake to this necessity, and he therefore did the next best thing in supporting free schools open to every one without the taint of charity to offend the sensitive pride of the poor. New York might long have remained a city of illiterates if De Witt Clinton had not been one of its citizens, and it is but a just recognition of his services that the largest high school in the city now bears his name.

Clinton had also much to do with the method of teaching in the schools of the Society. He studied the English system of pupil teaching, sometimes called the Bell-Lancaster system from the two men who claimed the invention of it, and favored its adoption in American schools. The basic idea of this system was to turn the routine of teaching over to the older children who could teach what they themselves had recently learned. The teacher himself was like the superintendent of a factory:

his chief duty was to police the establishment and see that everything went smoothly. By this arrangement one man sometimes took charge of five hundred children. No quicker and cheaper method of varnishing a large class with a knowledge of the three R's can well be imagined; and the schoolboy monitors, though they were not competent to give expert instruction, were hardly expected to do so. In those days even the "regular" teacher of the district school was little more than a drillmaster to keep the children in order and to hear their lessons; and why could not a monitor do as much? Many ingenious ideas were introduced as part of the system, such as teaching the children to read from wall charts and to write by making letters in sand.

After Clinton's death the Public School Society found itself more and more out of touch with the times. The growing Irish-Catholic population of the city demanded a share of the State funds for their own schools, and, when met by the answer that public money should not be used to support sectarian schools, argued that the Public School Society was a private organization dominated by a Protestant atmosphere. They added their voices — and votes — to complaints from other sources against permitting a private legal monopoly of

public instruction. Governor Seward at last expressed the popular discontent in his Annual Message in 1842 and urged "the expediency of vesting in the people of the City of New York, what I am sure the people of no other part of the State would, upon any consideration, relinquish — the education of their children." The Public School Society did not take its death sentence quietly. Professing to fear "the blighting influence of party strife and sectarian animosity" if the schools were transferred to public control, the Society continued for ten years to support its own free schools in spite of the organization of public schools known as the "ward schools." When the two systems were finally combined into one, each contributed several buildings and a nearly equal number of pupils. The present city public school system which grew out of this union is on as comprehensive a scale as that of the largest States. There is even a public university, the College of the City of New York, the largest municipal college in America, with a history covering seventy years of service to the community.

De Witt Clinton's interest in education was not confined to his work for the Public School Society. As Governor he succeeded in securing liberal

appropriations from the State Legislature, but his programme of educational statesmanship, outlined in his annual messages, far outranged the imagination of his generation. He desired, by establishing monitorial high schools, to develop into a corps of professionally trained teachers the monitors who taught under the Lancaster plan. He advocated the higher education of women. He favored special provision for the education of Indians and negroes. He advised the creation of a State Board of Agriculture to correspond with the county societies and suggested "a professorship in agriculture connected with the board or attached to the university." Clinton laid special emphasis on the less formal educational agencies — libraries, lyceums, county agricultural associations, mechanics' institutes, and all manner of literary, historical, and philosophical societies. The educational progress of New York has in the main followed the path blazed by Clinton.¹

Clinton did not live to see free common schools under public control established throughout the State. After many years of agitation the New York Legislature passed an act in 1849 providing

¹ See *The Educational Views and Influence of De Witt Clinton* by Edward A. Fitzpatrick.

for the abolition of all school fees and for the support of all common schools by local taxation with aid from the State fund, and on referendum the people approved the change by an overwhelming majority. But opposition to the free school was not yet dead. The following year the question of repeal was submitted to the State, and the vote was so close that the Legislature ventured to set aside the twice repeated verdict of the majority of citizens and enact a compromise bill whereby a State tax was levied on all property for the support of the schools, retaining the rate bill to make up any local deficit. Parents unable to pay might send their children to school free, but this fact only emphasized the social chasm between the rich and the poor. Not until 1867, nearly forty years after the death of De Witt Clinton, were the public schools free to all.

The fight for free schools was one of the great landmarks in the history of American democracy. Public-spirited men urged that the interests of the commonwealth demanded that education be universal. "We hold," said *The Tribune* in 1850, "that our present school tax is not imposed on the rich for the benefit of the poor; but imposed on the whole State for the benefit of the State." One

advocate of tax-supported education declared that "property can better afford to educate four children in the schoolhouse than one in the street." The workingmen of the cities strongly favored any change that would abolish the stigma of charity from public education, the more so that New York City was already accustomed to the free schools founded by the Public School Society. Many of the other cities shouldered the burden of taxation so willingly that there was no deficit to be made good from the pocketbook of the parent.

In the rural districts both conditions and ideas were different. On the referendum of 1850 forty-two counties out of fifty-nine favored the repeal of the law providing free schools, and nearly all these were purely rural. The New York farmer was not indifferent or averse to education, but he had no experience of the free school system. "The right of the parent" to care for his own children's education and "the right of property" not to be taxed for the benefit of other people prevented him from seeing "the right of the child." The farmer viewed with some disapproval the "fads and frills" with which the old-time district school was being contaminated. Resolutions voted by one rural district, for instance, ran thus: "We are in favor of

a simple and plain system of popular education, without Normal Schools, teachers' institutes, district school journals, supported by the State, or hordes of school officers." There were also the partisans of the private school who were opposed to free schools; and one Roman Catholic organ in New York professed to fear the coming of "state monopoly, state despotism, and state socialism" in this once free country if public schools became universal. Neither the example of New England nor the arguments of Clinton could convert the whole of New York to the benefits of the free school. Time and experience were needed.

The free school had an even harder struggle for existence in the Keystone State than in the Empire State, for in Pennsylvania the principle that the parent should pay for the schooling of his children was reinforced by jealousies of race and creed which were rooted in the traditions of colonial times. The Germans in particular clung to their own private schools, for through them they were enabled to keep alight the flame of their ancestral culture, which, they feared, might too easily be extinguished by the "Anglo-Saxon" influences of the public school. Thus in Pennsylvania, in the early years of the nineteenth century, was seen the

curious paradox of people whose kinsmen in Germany at that time enjoyed the best public school system in the world working zealously to keep the free school out of the State in which they lived.

In 1834 there was enacted in Pennsylvania the first law providing throughout this State schools that were free to all as well as to those who could not afford to pay. Private education and "pauper" schools had left ominous gaps in the instruction of the rising generation, and it has been estimated that in Pennsylvania alone there were in the third decade of the century a quarter of a million children of school age not attending any kind of school.¹ As was later the case in New York, the law was passed without much difficulty; but when the time came to put it into effect and taxes consequently threatened to increase, there was a strong agitation for its repeal. The cause of free education was saved by Thaddeus Stevens, who fought for it in the Legislature with an eloquence and fiery earnestness that at once turned the tide of public opinion and made him a national figure.

The law of 1834 permitted districts, if they preferred going without their share of the State fund

¹ Wickersham, *History of Education in Pennsylvania*.

to paying local taxes for free schools, to stand outside of the new system. The northern counties of the State, settled largely from New York and New England, quickly adopted the free school, and the workingmen of the big towns were enthusiastic. On the other hand, the German settlements, many rural districts, and places where sectarian influence was strong and private schools were many and good, refused for many years to take advantage of the law.

It was, of course, unfortunate that the American school had to make its way against the prejudices and narrow views of economy that could not see why a rich bachelor should be taxed to keep all the children of the district at school. But a slow conversion is often the most lasting. No one in any State could be found today to write in all seriousness such an appeal as was addressed to the North Carolina Legislature by an opponent of public education in 1829: "Gentlemen, I hope you do not conceive it at all necessary, that *everybody* should be able to read, write, and cipher. If one is to keep a store or a school, or to be a lawyer or physician, such branches may, *perhaps*, be taught him; though I do not look upon them as by any means indispensable: but if he is to be a plain farmer, or a

mechanic, they are of no manner of use, but rather a detriment."¹

In spite of this persuasive plea, North Carolina was converted to a belief in the public school even before the Civil War, and most of the other Southern States followed its example immediately after the close of the conflict. The wealthy and populous States of the middle Atlantic seaboard achieved free education earlier, but only against the strong obstacles of the well-endowed private schools for the rich and the charity schools for the poor which, between them, seemed to leave little room for a democratic education. But beyond the Ohio and the Mississippi there were new communities where the free school was as much a matter of course in the days of the sod hut as in the days of the skyscraper. These frontier folk could have little comprehension of the task that had confronted such pioneers of democracy as De Witt Clinton in awakening the conscience of conservative and tradition bound communities.

¹ Knight, *Public School Education in North Carolina*.

CHAPTER XI

THE WESTWARD MOVEMENT

Religion, morality and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged. — *Ordinance of 1787.*

I doubt whether one single law of any lawgiver, ancient or modern, has produced effects of a more distinct, marked and lasting character than the Ordinance of 1787. — *Daniel Webster.*

As each new State emerged from the western wilderness, there ensued a period of local competition in which rival towns strove for the possession of the various governmental institutions. It was commonly conceded that in the long run a university would be preferable to a penitentiary and a normal school to an insane asylum. But as first aid to a pioneer town struggling for existence the choice was debatable, for a penal or charitable institution was from the start sure of inmates and state support while an educational institution was not so certain of getting either. Both of the former institutions would be a steady source of income to the community while the latter usually required

local subsidies for its establishment. But a college of any sort had the advantage in that it gave a certain prestige to a town and attracted a superior class of settlers. In order so far as possible to satisfy these local demands the university was sometimes given to one town, the agricultural college or colleges to another, with perhaps several experimental stations or farms in various places and one or more normal schools elsewhere.

Never in the history of the country were colleges so sought for as in the settlement of the great Mississippi Valley. The various religious denominations, all eager to secure "strategic points," were ready to meet the demand. Sometimes it happened that two or three "universities" were started simultaneously in the same town. The tourist may still see from his car window a stately building standing solitary and deserted and on inquiry may learn that it was a university built to boom a certain suburb in the vain hope of pulling the town in that direction. The rival denominational colleges joined in denouncing the State University as an "atheistic institution" where chapel was not compulsory and the professors were suspected — not always without reason — of teaching evolution and practicing vivisection.

But out of this chaos, in which religious zeal, educational aspirations, local pride, political wire-pulling, and the real estate interests were inextricably commingled, have grown the fine institutions which appeal everywhere to State pride. Sectarian animosities have died out. Doctrinal orthodoxy no longer serves to conceal educational inefficiency. The State Universities, though non-sectarian, count between seventy and eighty per cent of church adherents among their students. As an institution the college is becoming differentiated from the university, though there are still misnomers on both sides of the line. The college presidents who went about the State "drumming up" students in order to make a good showing to conference or synod inspired an ambition for higher education in the minds of boys and girls who otherwise would never have thought of such a thing. This early collegiate competition is doubtless one reason why now a much larger proportion of the population goes to college in the West than in the East.

The scheme of endowing education by land grants, never elsewhere carried so far as in America, was an ingenious one. From a theoretical standpoint it seems perfect, for it meant the absorption

for public purposes of what Henry George called "the unearned increment." A newly organized State was rich in land but in nothing else. The Government could afford to be generous in donations of land which cost it nothing and which would rise in value as the country became settled, automatically keeping pace with the prosperity of the community. The income from this landed endowment might be expected to increase at least as rapidly as the number of children to be educated.

Actually the scheme did not work out so well as it promised. The land at first did not cost anything — but neither did it at first bring in anything. The institutions dependent upon it were in the position of the heir to a dukedom who might expect to be master of a magnificent fortune some fifty years hence but in the meantime had not a penny. Having turned over to the State University the township set aside for it by Congress, the Legislature was prone to think that it had done enough and to expect the university to run itself on such a grant. But a university cannot live on land alone, especially when it cannot lease it. It was in truth a royal domain, but professors' salaries cannot be paid out of prospective valuations.

So it is no wonder that regents sometimes succumbed to temptation and sold at \$1.25 an acre land that is now worth \$125. If the colleges of the United States had been able to hold on to all the real estate that they received in the last three hundred years, they would be the wealthiest of their kind in the world. The total land grants for the common schools, which amount to 81,064,300 acres and are equal to the combined area of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, are now worth \$500,000,000.¹

The colonial colleges were aided in their early days by land grants, but the most extensive cessions of this sort were those made by the Federal Government. When the States claiming land in the Northwest Territory, between the Ohio River and the Great Lakes and east of the Mississippi, agreed to surrender their claims to the Government of the United States, the Land Ordinance of 1785 was passed by the Congress of the Confederation providing for a system of rectangular surveys in the new domain. In this ordinance was the provision that "there shall be reserved the lot No. 16 of every township for the maintenance of public schools within the said township." In this same year Congress sold 1,500,000 acres of land to the

¹ Monroe's *Cyclopedia of Education*, vol. iv, p. 375.

Ohio Company, reserving Section 16 in every township for schools, Section 29 for religion, and granting two townships for a university. Ohio was thus the first State to receive the educational land grant and the only one to receive the religious land grant. Of these townships one went to the founding of the University of Ohio at Athens in 1804 and another to the founding of Miami University at Oxford in 1809. Ohio State University at Columbus came into existence in 1870 when the Legislature complied with the terms of the Morrill land grant. Besides these three State institutions Ohio has thirty-seven other universities and colleges, mostly established by various denominations. Of these Oberlin and Antioch are mentioned elsewhere. Western Reserve, now at Cleveland, was founded in 1826 at Hudson by the Presbyterians in part to counteract the Congregational College of Oberlin which they regarded as too radical. The chief formative influence of the Ohio public school system was the association of teachers, the first of its kind, known as the Western Literary Institute, organized at Cincinnati in 1829. One of its founders, Calvin E. Stowe, was commissioned by the Legislature to study the schools of Europe. He came back enthusiastic for the Prussian system

and inspired Horace Mann of Massachusetts and Henry Barnard of New York with the same ideals. The Ohio Legislature in 1838 printed ten thousand copies of his report, and it was largely through their influence that the educational system of Ohio and other States was reformed and strengthened.

Not to be outdone by Ohio the first General Assembly of the Territory of Indiana in 1806 passed an act establishing Vincennes University signed by Governor William Henry Harrison, afterwards President of the United States. The preamble is worth quoting as illustrating not only the educational ideals of the pioneer community, but also the style of legislative rhetoric:

Whereas, the independence, happiness, and energy of every republic depend (under the influence of the destinies of Heaven) upon the wisdom, effort, talents, and energy of its citizens and rulers; and

Whereas science, literature, and the liberal arts contribute to an eminent degree to improve these qualities and requirements; and

Whereas learning hath ever been found the ablest advocate of genuine liberty, the best supporter of rational religion, and the source of the only solid and imperishable glory which nations can acquire. . . .

In order to support "rational religion" a department of theology was authorized in Vincennes

University, but it was stipulated that "no particular tenets of religion" should be taught. The trustees were instructed by the Act of 1806 "to establish an institution for the education of females" as soon as their funds should permit.

But Vincennes University did not thrive, and in 1822 the State Legislature transferred the unsold land to the seminary that had been established at Bloomington. The trustees of Vincennes brought suit for the restoration of the lands, and thirty years later obtained from the United States Supreme Court a decision in their favor. But the long litigation had consumed a large part of the disputed fund, and by that time the rival institution at Bloomington was firmly established as the University of Indiana. The Morrill Act in 1862 gave to Indiana land scrip to 390,000 acres which realized over \$300,000. This was devoted to the establishment of a separate agricultural college, later named Purdue University in honor of John Purdue of La Fayette who endowed it with \$150,000. It is now one of the largest of all State engineering schools.

That the early legislators of Indiana had a complete conception of the educational theory which has been since worked out in the Western

States is shown from this clause in the constitution of 1816: "It shall be the duty of the General Assembly, as soon as circumstances permit, to provide by law for a general system of education, ascending in regular gradation from township schools to a state university, wherein tuition shall be gratis and equally open to all." All fines for breaches of the penal laws and "the money which shall be paid as an equivalent by persons exempt from militia duty, except in time of war" were to be applied to the support of the county seminaries. But circumstances did not very soon permit the application of this aspiring programme, even with the aid of criminals and "slackers," and it was more than fifty years before all the gradations were in place.

Illinois, the third of the States carved out of the old Indiana Territory, was slower than the other in developing her institutions of higher education, but in recent years she has splendidly atoned for earlier deficiencies. The State received a township in 1818 as a birthday present from the nation and inherited another township from its parent, the land district of Kaskaskia. But the Illinois legislators, for reasons best known to themselves, kept the funds from the sale of these lands in the

State treasury for nearly forty years instead of using them for the support of a college, university, or "seminary of learning." In 1857 the accumulated funds with part of the accrued interest were turned over to the State Normal University.

The University of Illinois originated in a plan for an industrial university proposed in a speech at a farmers' convention at Granville in 1851 by Professor J. B. Turner, who, if not the father, was at least the furtherer of the Morrill Act. The Illinois Industrial University was established at Urbana by aid of the Morrill land scrip. The institution subsequently dropped the "Industrial" but not the industry and is now one of the most prosperous of the State Universities.

In Wisconsin the federal land grants for higher education were even worse mismanaged than in Illinois, yet the State University at Madison, founded in 1848, has now some eight thousand students and has become renowned throughout the world for its active coöperation with the people and the Government of the State in the promotion of its agricultural interests and in the solution of its administrative problems.

To go through the history of each of the States in turn to show how they utilized the federal land

grants would be tedious; their early mistakes and final achievements are much the same, differing chiefly in degree. But an exception must be noted in the case of Texas which, entering the union as an independent republic, retained its public lands and so was enabled to make more generous provision for its schools and university than the Federal Government had done in the other new States. The University of Texas has received grants of over two million acres.

According to Huxley, "no system of public education is worth the name of national unless it creates a great educational ladder, with one end in the gutter and the other in the university." Such a ladder now exists in all of the States outside the original thirteen. The ascent is practically free and in most cases open to all on equal terms without regard to creed, race, or sex. Yet the aspiring student is not confined to this ladder, but may climb others if he prefers. The State does not fear competition and has permitted and encouraged rival institutions of all grades to be established. Private elementary and secondary schools are not so common in the West as in the East, but there are many independent colleges and universities in all the Western States. Though founded chiefly by the

various denominations, these institutions make no sectarian discrimination among the students and frequently not even in the faculty, and their charge for tuition is almost as low as in the State institutions. Old animosity has died down, and nowadays the denominational colleges are usually on friendly terms with the State. The State University is usually willing to concede that many of these colleges can give as good an undergraduate education as it can, and the denominational college on its part is usually willing to concede that it cannot compete with the State institutions in the facilities for technical, professional, and graduate training.

So in one way or another all of the Western and Southern States, and some of the Northeastern, have established their own universities as well as normal schools and agricultural colleges, sometimes combined and sometimes in different places. These institutions differ widely in size and standing. Some are small and weak, doing work of a low order and being periodically upset by political disturbances; others rival the largest endowed universities in income, numbers, and the work of their graduate and professional schools. They are much alike, however, in their general characteristics. As a rule, the State Universities charge no

tuition except perhaps a moderate fee in the professional schools and for students from outside the State. They usually provide professional courses in law, medicine, engineering, and the like, but none in theology. The residence halls or dormitories which form a prominent feature of the endowed colleges are not so common and sometimes altogether absent in the State Universities. These institutions are responsive to the needs of the people and quick to provide new forms of vocational training. They extend their influence widely beyond their walls and often carry on scientific, legislative, and financial investigations for the State Government. They form the crown of the public school system and admit to some departments graduates from any reputable high school, giving equal opportunities to rich and poor, to men and women. The American State University may justly be regarded as constituting a distinct type not to be found anywhere else in the world.

CHAPTER XII

THE RISE OF THE STATE UNIVERSITY

Where the State has bestowed education the man who accepts it must be content to accept it merely as a charity unless he returns it to the State in full, in the shape of good citizenship. . . . Only a limited number of us can ever become scholars . . . but we can all be good citizens. We can all lead a life of action, a life of endeavor, a life that is to be judged primarily by the effort, somewhat by the result, along the lines of helping the growth of what is right and decent and generous and lofty in our several communities, in the State, in the Nation. — *Theodore Roosevelt.*

THE idea of a State University is older than the States themselves, though the institution was slow in developing and in differentiating itself as a distinct type. At first most of the colonial universities received public funds and were under governmental control. The first constitutions of Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Vermont, in the days of the Revolution, provided for universities. The University of Georgia was organized in 1785 and the University of Tennessee in 1794. Any of these early beginnings might have developed into the typical State University; but the honor of being

called "the mother of the State Universities" was reserved for Michigan.

The germ of the State University came from France, but it grew up under German influences. The revolution that severed the political bonds connecting America with the mother country also broke the thread of educational traditions, and American educators turned from their English enemies to their French friends. French began to be taught in the colleges. John Adams, coming back from Paris full of enthusiasm for French educational ideals, embodied them in the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780 and founded the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Chevalier Quesnay de Beaurepaire, who came over in 1778 to fight for American independence, remained to lay the corner-stone of an *Académie des Sciences et Beaux Arts des États-Unis d'Amérique* at Richmond in 1786 under the patronage of Jefferson and many other distinguished men of Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, and France. Quesnay's academy comprised a graduate school, a museum, a press, and commissions to coöperate with the Government in the investigation of the flora and fauna of the country and in the development of its mineral resources. Nothing came of this

scheme, although the desired objects are now being attained in a similar way through the State Universities and the national bureaus of mining, geology, fisheries, agriculture, and ethnology.

In France the constructive genius of the Encyclopedists was supplemented and actualized by the practical genius of Napoleon. The University of France as established in 1808 included all the colleges and schools of the country above the elementary. This, as we have seen, was the idea which Jefferson had in mind for the University of Virginia but was not able to carry out in its entirety. It was the idea Jefferson was seeking to realize when he invited Dupont de Nemours to visit him at Philadelphia and Monticello and to draw up a plan of public education.¹ The idea was brought to New York by John Jay and was carried out by Alexander Hamilton in the "University of the State of New York," which corresponds most nearly to the French conception of a university, as it is not a teaching body but rather the central educational office of the State.

¹ Dupont's plan *Sur l'Éducation Nationale dans les États-Unis*, published in 1800, provides for a University of North America to embrace primary and secondary schools, colleges, and professional schools of medicine, mining, social science, law, and higher mathematics.

But of all the seeds from the French tree wafted across the Atlantic that which fell in the forests of Michigan brought forth most abundantly. There were only five or six thousand people, French and English, scattered over this vast territory when in 1817 the Acting Governor and two Supreme Court Judges authorized the establishment of a system of education modeled after Napoleon's University of France. Judge Woodward drew up the plan for it and invented the nomenclature. It was to be called "The Catholepistemiad or University of Michigania." There were to be thirteen didaxia or professorships, to wit: the didaxia of Catholepistemia (universal science), of Anthropoglossica (languages and literatures), of Mathematica, of Physiognostica (natural history), of Physiosophica (physics), of Astronomia, of Chymia, of Iatrica (medicine), of Œconomica (economics), of Ethica, of Polemitactica (military tactics), of Diegetica (history), and of Ennœica (philosophy and religion). This institution, according to the custom of the time, was to be supported by lotteries as well as by public taxation. Instruction was to be free to those not having adequate means. The "Catholepistemiad" or university was to maintain branch schools or academies in various parts of the territory

and some of these were actually established. The delicate question of the relations of the rival races and religions was neatly adjusted by giving seven of the chairs to the Reverend John Monteith, a Scotch Presbyterian minister of Detroit, and the other six to Father Gabriel Richard, a French Catholic priest.

The act of 1821 relieved the institution of its fantastic nomenclature and rigid constitution and it seemed likely to lapse into a college of the conventional type. But in the thirties a wave of German influence swept over America and started what is known as "the educational renaissance." The French influence had prevailed for about half a century but accomplished very little except to start the Universities of Virginia, New York, and Michigan. The German influence lasted a century and was much more powerful; in the East it transformed the colleges into universities and in the West it shaped the State Universities and the school system connected with them. The stream of American graduates to German universities which continued without cessation up to the Great War may be said to have started in 1815 when George Ticknor went to Göttingen. Ticknor was a Dartmouth man living in Boston when the read-

ing of Madame de Staël's work on Germany opened his eyes to the opportunities afforded by the universities of that country, and he determined to go there. But how could he learn the language? There were few German books to be had in Massachusetts, and he could not even find a native German competent to instruct him. He heard that there was a German dictionary in New Hampshire and sent for it. With such equipment he went to Göttingen. He was followed by Edward Everett, who found the facilities there far superior to those of Oxford and Cambridge and wrote back to Harvard to send on a scholar. In response to this suggestion the university sent George Bancroft. Dr. J. G. Cogswell, who went to Göttingen in 1815, also visited the school of Pestalozzi at Yverdon and the school of Fellenberg at Hofwyl, and when he came home he started a school on their principles at Round Hill near Northampton, Massachusetts. Bancroft, finding that his *alma mater*, Harvard, would not allow him to lecture on history although he had that privilege at Göttingen and Berlin, joined Cogswell in launching the Round Hill School, which ran for sixteen years. Ticknor on his return took a chair at Harvard and tried to introduce the German elective system, but

the time was not yet ripe and nobody listened to him. As a result of his persistency some slight freedom in the choice of studies was allowed to the students, but many years passed before Harvard was made completely elective. Jefferson, on the other hand, was much taken with Ticknor's ideas and tried to get him to come to the University of Virginia, where the elective system was established at the start.

Up to 1850 about a hundred Americans had studied at German universities,¹ among them Henry W. Longfellow, John Lothrop Motley, and Theodore Dwight Woolsey, President of Yale. After that date there was a rapid increase in the numbers of American students at German universities, where they were more hospitably received than in the British universities and were provided with better opportunities for graduate study and research. The influence of German literature and philosophy upon New England thought was strong, but the New England colleges were too set in their ways to be radically reshaped. In the West the State Universities were young when the German

¹ The complete list is published in B. A. Hinsdale's "Notes on the History of Foreign Influences upon Education in the United States" in the Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1898. See also Thwing's *History of Higher Education in America*, p. 320.

influence began to prevail, and they were largely molded by it. The chief instrumentality was the report on the Prussian school system made by Victor Cousin to the French Minister of Public Instruction in 1837. This report Sir William Hamilton took as the basis of his plea for university reform in Great Britain, but he failed to accomplish his purpose. At a later day the efforts of Matthew Arnold to introduce German ideas into English schools likewise proved ineffectual. But in America, through the medium of Horace Mann, President Tappan of Michigan, President Wayland of Brown, W. T. Harris, the Commissioner of Education, President White of Cornell, and others, the German system helped to effect a radical transformation of the schools and colleges in the greater part of the United States.

Let us return, for a concrete illustration, to the University of Michigan. The Act of 1837 completely reorganized the public school system on the Prussian plan, coördinated elementary, secondary, and university education, and brought it under governmental control. It stipulated that the fee for admission to the University should never exceed ten dollars and that no tuition should be charged to Michigan students. High schools and

minor colleges, corresponding to the German gymnasia, were to be established as branches of the University in various parts of the State, and there were to be institutions for the education of women, for the training of teachers, and for instruction in agriculture. Under this system a normal school on the Prussian plan was opened at Ypsilanti in 1850, following in this field Massachusetts (1839) and New York (1844). The agricultural college founded at Lansing in 1857 was the first of its kind in this country. Today every State has one or more of these institutions.

But in one respect the University of Michigan, like the University of Virginia, followed the German model too closely: it had no president. The rectoral plan, though apparently the more democratic, does not seem to work in America, and it was not until 1851, when the University of Michigan got a president — and a somewhat autocratic one — that the institution became securely prosperous. Henry P. Tappan left the chair of philosophy in the College of the City of New York to accept the call to Michigan because he wanted a chance to work out the ideas he had acquired in Germany. The first catalogue issued under his administration contains the announcement of bold

departures in the direction of freedom of choice and graduate study:

An institution cannot deserve the name of a university which does not aim in all the material of learning, in the professorships it establishes, and in the whole scope of its provisions, to make it possible for every student to study what he pleases and to any extent he pleases. Nor can it be regarded as consistent with the spirit of a free country to deny to its citizens the possibilities of the highest knowledge.

To appreciate the daring of this step it must be remembered that at that time Harvard had only three graduate students and that the first graduate school in America had been started at Yale in 1847, only five years before. Forty-one years after President Tappan had declared that the people had a right to free graduate instruction at public expense we find President Eliot of Harvard arguing against State support of higher education of any sort.¹ That this is the prevailing opinion in the East today is shown by the fact that the State Universities are mostly confined to the West.

President Tappan's proposed reforms were too ambitious for complete accomplishment; but he

¹ In the famous debate before the National Educational Association in 1893 when John W. Hoyt urged a national university.

introduced lectures and research work and extended the elective system which had been started at Michigan in 1837. The State Legislature in 1851 passed an act requiring the regents of the University to provide instruction for those who did not want to take the ancient languages. This was carried out by establishing a modern course leading to the degree of Bachelor of Science, which had been granted for the first time at the Lawrence Scientific School of Harvard the year before. The German seminar method of teaching history was later adopted at Michigan University by Charles Kendall Adams and Andrew D. White, both afterwards presidents of Cornell University.

The plan for the coördination of the high schools and university, though foreshadowed in the scheme of 1817, was not worked out until 1870. In their present form the high schools are independent of the universities as far as administration is concerned and are not supported by them; but the high schools are inspected by university officers and the diplomas of accredited schools are accepted in lieu of entrance examinations. The final examinations of the accredited high schools thus correspond to the *Abiturientenexamen* of Germany and the passage to the university is made as easy

and natural as the passage from the seventh to the eighth grade. The diploma system has been adopted by all the State Universities and has extended to all the endowed colleges except a few in the East.

The admission of women remains as one other step to be considered in the evolution of the State University system. This innovation, like other educational reforms, was instigated by the people rather than by the authorities. As early as 1858 the Michigan Legislature had declared that the high objects for which the university was organized could never be fully attained until women were admitted, but it was not until 1870 that the regents decided that no person of requisite literary and moral qualifications should be excluded from the State University. By that time the Universities of Iowa, Kansas, Indiana, and Minnesota were co-educational; those of Illinois, California, and Missouri adopted the system in the same year as Michigan. All the State Universities except those of Georgia, Florida, and Virginia are now co-educational. Ezra Cornell, in accordance with his Quaker principles, was anxious to give equal privileges to women in the university that he founded in 1865, but for a time he was overruled, and it

was not until 1872 that coeducation was introduced there by President White, formerly of the University of Michigan.

The State Universities and other institutions have imitated one another until now they are in most respects very much alike. Nor can any sharp distinction be drawn between them on the grounds that one class is supported by the State and the other by endowments and tuition. Cornell University, for instance, receives the Federal and State funds for agriculture and mechanic arts and is a State University in type though on a private foundation. The University of Michigan, which is here used as a type of the State University, did not receive a penny from the State until 1867, fifty years after its foundation. On the other hand, the appropriations of the General Court of Massachusetts to Harvard College from its founding in 1636 to 1786 reached a total of \$115,797, an amount equal to half a million dollars at the present time.

CHAPTER XIII

CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN AMERICA

The greatest religious fact in the United States today is the Catholic School System, maintained without any aid except from the people who love it. — *Archbishop Spalding.*

A SEPARATE chapter in this survey of American education must be devoted to the training carried on by the Roman Catholic Church, for its history has been distinct and its course of development in one respect the opposite from that of the rest of the country. Most American colleges were started under the auspices of some particular religious denomination. Those that were Protestant, however, have in the majority of cases become free from church control and usually retain little to distinguish them from those of other sects or from government institutions. The elementary and secondary education of Protestant children is now almost wholly carried on by public schools or by private institutions having no sectarian affiliations. But while this change has taken place the Roman

Catholics have been developing in the last fifty years an independent school system of their own, entirely under ecclesiastical control and covering all grades from the kindergarten to the university and professional schools.

The Catholic population of the United States, scanty at first, has been largely increased by annexation and by immigration. When Father Jogues, the illustrious French Jesuit of Canada, visited Manhattan Island in 1644, he found only two Catholics — an Irishman and a Portuguese woman. In 1789, when the hierarchy was constituted in the United States by the consecration of the Right Reverend John Carroll as Bishop of the See of Baltimore, there were about 15,800 Catholics in Maryland, 7,000 in Pennsylvania, and a few thousand scattered among the other States. But the territories subsequently annexed — Florida, Louisiana, Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, California, Porto Rico, and the Philippines — were Catholic in so far as they had been settled or christianized at all. Of the immigrants who poured into the country in a swelling stream up to the outbreak of the Great War the Irish, Germans, Poles, Italians, Czechs, Croats, and Lithuanians were largely Catholic. In 1919, according to the

Official Catholic Directory, the Catholic population of the United States numbered 17,549,324.

Catholic education in America antedates Protestant. Before schools were opened in New England, the Franciscans had missions in Florida and New Mexico. The Florida church dates back to 1565, almost to the time of the Council of Trent. By 1634 there were 35 Franciscan priests conducting 44 missions, with 30,000 Indian converts, some of whom were taught reading and writing. There is some record of a classical school for Spanish children at St. Augustine as early as 1606. But the Apalachees went on the warpath in 1703 and wiped out the missions. In 1736 Bishop Tejada reopened the seminary at St. Augustine, but again there came Indian wars, and at the time when Florida was annexed by the United States there was little left of the Catholic colony.

The Indians of New Mexico were of a more tractable type than those in Florida. They were already settled in pueblos when the white man entered and had developed simple forms of agriculture and domestic arts. With the expedition of Don Juan de Oñate in 1598 into what is now the State of New Mexico went several Franciscan friars. Others followed, settling in the pueblos

and teaching the natives to sing and to pray and to work. Under such direction they developed not a little skill at brickmaking and carpentry, and built their own churches with curiously carved roofs and painted walls. By 1630 missions had been established in 90 pueblos comprising a population of 60,000. There were fifty Franciscans in New Mexico, and many of their convents had schools attached where the sacristan of the church served as schoolmaster. But in 1680 the Indians revolted, determined to root out the Spanish civilization. They massacred the friars and demolished the churches and schools. Ten years later there was not a Spaniard left within the limits of New Mexico.

In the north the Catholic missionaries were no less courageous and enterprising. As early as 1635 the Jesuits at Quebec had founded a college which the great Bishop Laval a few years later declared to be almost the equal of similar institutions in France. Soon other schools followed, among which the Ursuline convent was particularly noteworthy for devotion and efficiency. Laval sought to civilize the Indians by educating their children with those of the French. With this end in view he founded the Quebec Seminary in 1663. Besides

the Jesuit priests and the Ursuline nuns, there were the Sulpicians and the Récollets to care for the spiritual welfare and education of the northern colonists. It is interesting to note that at the time when Harvard was being established by Protestants in New England, the foundations of Laval University were being laid by Catholics at Quebec. Out of these two institutions, so founded and so courageously nurtured, there grew up in time two radically different systems of education, both of far-reaching influence in the later development of the two countries.

In California the Franciscans were more successful than in Florida because they adopted the Jesuit system of segregation. So long as the Indian converts remained in contact with the heathen population of their native villages they could not be kept constant to the requirements of the new life, for the power of the medicine man counteracted the persuasion of the priest. The Jesuits of Paraguay, in order to overcome the evil influence of the environment, formed separate industrial colonies where they could train the Indians under their exclusive guidance and control.

In Lower California the Jesuits had started mission work as early as 1697, but in 1767, when

Charles III ordered the expulsion of the Jesuits from all the Spanish dominions, they were replaced by Franciscan friars. The Franciscans in their turn relinquished the peninsula to the Dominicans and entered upon the new field of Upper California, where Father Junípero Serra established a mission at San Diego in 1769. The missions so multiplied and prospered that at the time of their suppression in 1834 there was a chain of them stretching north for 700 miles and sheltering more than 30,000 converts. Under direction of the *padres* the Indians constructed the mission buildings and furniture now so much admired and imitated. In these Catholic colonies the Indian children and converts were taught to recite in their own tongues the prayers, creeds, and commandments, and — what was much more difficult — they were taught to work. Whatever their inclinations may have been, the Indians worked to such good effect that ere long these little communities grew wealthy. The annual output of cattle and crops at the time the missions were seized by the State was worth more than \$2,000,000.

At first the friars, being more anxious to make Christians than Spaniards out of the Indians, confined their instruction to the native languages

and paid little attention to orders issued by Governor Borica in 1795 that they teach Spanish exclusively in the missions. Borica therefore determined to start a public school system independent of the clergy. He opened the first of these schools in the public granary at San José with a retired sergeant as schoolmaster.¹ It was not easy, however, to find teachers, for at that time the Spanish population of California numbered less than a thousand souls, and few of the soldiers could read or write.

When Mexico threw off the Spanish yoke, the missions in California as well as in Mexico were declared secularized. San Miguel, the last of the California missions, was sold out by the last of the governors on July 4, 1846, only three days before the American flag was raised over Monterey. "The flag of the United States appeared ten years too late to save the mission property from the rapacity of unscrupulous greed and the Indians from dispersion. What remained was restored to the Church by order of the United States Courts."²

The missions in the Californias had been started

¹ Bancroft's *History of California*, vol. i, p. 643.

² *Catholic Educational Work in Early California*, by the Reverend Zephyrin Engelhardt, O. F. M., in *Proceedings of the Catholic Educational Association* (1918).

and continuously aided by a financial foundation known as the Pious Fund, for which the Jesuits had collected the first contributions in 1697. When Mexico became independent, however, its Government appropriated the Pious Fund, which then amounted to about two million dollars, and promised to pay interest at six per cent. But after Upper California was taken over by the United States, Mexico refused to pay anything on that part of the fund which belonged by right to the Church in Upper California. For fifty years the United States pressed this claim against Mexico and finally referred it to the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague, which in 1902 decided in favor of the United States. Mexico was ordered by the court to pay annually \$43,050.99 and interest in arrears to the amount of \$1,420,682.67.

In New Orleans under French rule elementary education was begun by Father Cecil, a Capuchin, who opened a parish school for boys in 1722, and five years later ten Ursuline Sisters started a convent school for girls. The transfer of the Louisiana Territory to the United States in 1804 excited alarm in the minds of the Sisters, especially since Jefferson was supposed to share the political and religious views of the French revolutionists. But

when the Mother Superior wrote to President Jefferson to ask protection, she received the following reassuring reply: "Whatever diversity of shade may appear in the religious opinions of our fellow citizens, the charitable objects of your Institution cannot be indifferent to any; and its furtherance of the wholesome purposes of society by training up its younger members in the way they should go, can not fail to insure it the patronage of the Government it is under. Be assured it will meet with all the protection my office can give it."

These schools established in the Spanish and French possessions for the Indians or for the children of the colonists were, however, quite apart from the main stream of Catholic education. This had its real origin in Maryland. With the first colonists sent out by Lord Baltimore in 1634 came Father Andrew White, a learned Jesuit who set himself to study the Indian language and prepared a grammar and catechism. But after the Clai-borne-Ingle rebellion ten years later the Jesuits were deported in chains.

A school which had been started in 1640 among the Catholics of Newtown, Maryland, was in 1653 endowed by the will of Edward Cotton, a rich planter, with all his "female Cattle and their

Increase for Ever” and with “one thousand pounds Weight of good sound Merchantable leaf Tobacco and Cask.” This school was, in 1677, developed into a Jesuit “school for humanities” in order “to bring those regions, which foreigners have unjustly called ferocious, to a higher state of virtue and civilization.” The Jesuits also opened a school in New York City in 1684 near the corner of Broadway and Wall Street, or the site of Trinity Church. A few years later these schools at New York and Newtown were suppressed. This period of persecution lasted a century until the overthrow of British rule. In 1704 a law was passed in Maryland providing that if any persons professing to be of the Church of Rome should keep school, or take upon themselves the education, government, or boarding of youth, at any place in the province, upon conviction, such offenders should be transported to England to undergo the penalties provided there by Statutes 11 and 12, William III, “for the further preventing the growth of Popery.”

Rich Catholics nevertheless tried to maintain the faith in their families by the *sub rosa* employment of Jesuit tutors — although this subjected them to a fine of 40 shillings a day — and by sending their sons abroad under aliases to the Belgian

College of St. Omer, although this made them liable to a penalty of 500 pounds. Even the importation of an "Irish Papist servant" involved a duty of 40 shillings which went to the support of schools exclusively under the control of the Church of England.

In 1706 the Jesuits founded a preparatory school at Bohemia Manor, in the most remote corner of Maryland, close to the Pennsylvania line. This institution developed into a classical college, but it was closed in 1765 and today its very site is in question. Yet among the pupils enrolled in this wilderness school were "Jacky" Carroll, afterwards Archbishop of Baltimore, and his cousin, Charles Carroll of Carrollton, whom every school-boy knows as the best penman among the signers of the *Declaration of Independence*.

The Revolution inaugurated a new era of religious freedom. John Carroll, who had become prefect of the Jesuit College of Bruges, returned to the United States and became in 1789 the first bishop of the Roman Catholic Church in America. In 1791 he founded Georgetown College, which became the leading Jesuit university of the United States. The second Catholic college in America was Mount St. Mary's at Emmitsburg, Maryland,

which was founded by the Sulpicians in 1808. America has been the gainer by every outburst of intolerance in Europe and has often found its most valuable men among those who were thought unfit to live in their native land. The outcast dissenters of England founded New England. The Huguenots from France have given to America many of her foremost men of science. So likewise, when the Catholic churches and schools were suppressed by the French Revolution, the expelled clergy gave a great impetus to Catholic education in the United States.

The Society of St. Sulpice, which had been founded in Paris in 1642 for the education of ecclesiastics, was among the victims of the French Revolution. Four of the Sulpicians came to Baltimore in 1791. One of them, Father Flaget, later became the first bishop in Kentucky. Another, Father Richard, went to Detroit, where he set up the first press there, printed the first newspaper, and took part in the founding of the University of Michigan, the "Catholepistemiad" already described. A third, the Reverend William Du-bourg, became president of Georgetown Academy, founded St. Mary's Seminary at Baltimore, and, when he became Bishop of Louisiana in 1815,

brought over six religious orders for pioneer educational work west of the Mississippi.

St. Mary's, Baltimore, was at first a failure. In 1791 it started with five students but in a few years the attendance fell to none. When Napoleon restored the Church, Father Emery, Superior General of the Sulpicians, determined to call all the fathers back to France. But Bishop Carroll begged him to allow them to remain. The question was therefore referred to Pope Pius VII. The Pope in his wisdom said to Father Emery: "My son, let that seminary remain. It will bear fruit in its own time." The Pope's faith was eventually fulfilled, for St. Mary's became the largest and most influential of Catholic seminaries and by 1910 had supplied over 1800 priests and 30 bishops to the Church in America. The founder of St. Mary's, Father Dubourg, while on a visit to New York met Mrs. Elizabeth Ann Seton, a widow who had been converted to Catholicism and was zealous for service in her new faith. Father Dubourg induced her to come to Maryland to start a school for girls. Joined by other pious women, she formed in 1809 an organization of Sisters of Charity on a farm near Emmitsburg. Later on it was decided to affiliate with the French Sisters of

Charity of St. Vincent de Paul. The order grew rapidly and by 1850 had established fifty-eight schools in various States.

The Sisters of the Visitation, another widespread teaching order of women, started in America at about the same time and place. A young Irish lady, Miss Alice Lalor, came with two widows to Georgetown in 1799 at the invitation of Father Neale, President of Georgetown College, to open a school for girls which subsequently developed into a convent and academy of the Visitation Order of St. Francis de Sales.

Next to Maryland, Pennsylvania had the largest Catholic population in colonial days, for the Quakers were more tolerant than the Episcopalians or the Puritans. While the Catholics met with persecution in Maryland, they found full religious freedom and even sympathy on the Pennsylvania side of the line. Protestants aided in building Father Schneider's first church at Goshenhoppen and sent their children to the school that he opened in 1741 in a two-story frame house. It was indeed an opportunity not to be neglected, for there was no other school in the settlement and it is not every child who can learn his A B C's from a former Rector Magnificus of Heidelberg University, as

was the Reverend Theodore Schneider. In Philadelphia in 1781 St. Mary's parish bought an old Quaker schoolhouse and opened therein the mother school of all the Catholic parochial schools in the English-speaking States.

One of the four French Sulpicians who came to Baltimore in 1791 was Stephen Theodore Badin, the first priest to be ordained within the thirteen original States. He was sent immediately afterward to the "dark and bloody ground" of Kentucky, although he was only twenty-five years old and knew but a few words of English. Here he labored alone for fourteen years, an austere and indefatigable priest, living largely in the saddle as he visited the widely scattered families. He was joined in 1806 by the saintly Father Nerinckx who had been educated at the Belgian universities of Louvain and Malines and had been driven out by the Revolution. Father Nerinckx was a true mystic from the Land of Mystics but withal practical, and he found in the Kentucky wilderness a fertile field. He was strong enough to roll logs for his own churches and to master a bully single-handed. He and Father Badin built at Bardstown the log cabin, sixteen feet square, which served in 1811 as the episcopal palace for the reception of

Bishop Flaget, whose see embraced the whole northwestern territory of the United States although it contained only a thousand Catholic families. In 1812 Father Nerinckx got together a group of women willing to devote their lives to the Christian training of girls and he organized them at Little Loretto as "The Society of the Friends of Mary Sorrowing at the Foot of the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ." The order is commonly known as the "Sisters of Loretto," from the *Santa Casa* or Holy House in Nazareth where the Virgin Mary was born and which, according to tradition, had been carried away by angels in 1291 and placed first in Dalmatia and later at Loretto, Italy. Miss Anne Rhodes, the first superioress of the community, provided the funds for its establishment by the donation of a slave who was sold by Father Nerinckx for \$450. The Lorettones, inspired by the zeal of their founder, increased their numbers and colonized until within a dozen years they had six schools containing 250 girls.

Two other teaching communities of women originated in Kentucky at this time. Father David, a Sulpician who came with Bishop Flaget, organized the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth near Bardstown. The Dominican Father Wilson organized

the Sisters of St. Dominic at St. Rose. These three communities spread rapidly through Kentucky, Missouri, and Arkansas. As the country became more settled, they established convent schools for girls in other Western States.

In New York up to 1822 the Catholic schools of the parishes of St. Peter's and St. Patrick's received, like the schools of other denominations, a part of the public school funds. After that the Public School Society took charge of the distribution of the funds and stopped the appropriation to sectarian schools. In 1840 Bishop Hughes of New York made a hard fight for a share in the public funds, but he was beaten. He then declared that "the days have come and the place in which the school is more necessary than the church" and set out to establish an independent school system under church control. In this he was so successful that, before his death, nearly every church in New York had been provided with a parish school.

These were the days of the "no Popery" agitation when "Native Americans" and Irish fought in the streets of New York and Philadelphia over the relative merits of the Douay and King James's versions of the Bible, although many of the belligerents doubtless could not have told the two

books apart. The Catholics objected to the custom of holding devotional exercises in the Protestant form at the opening of school sessions. The Protestants, on the other hand, were alarmed at the rapid influx of large numbers of Irish and German Catholics and feared the overthrow of the free public school system which was their country's pride. The outcome of the conflict was a clean-cut separation of public and sectarian schools. Bible-reading, hymns, and prayers have been almost altogether eliminated from the public schools. This exclusion, however, does not make the schools acceptable to the Catholics and Lutherans who believe that religious training cannot safely be divorced from secular education. Wherever possible, therefore, they have established their own schools.

The First Provincial Council of Baltimore declared in 1829: "We deem it entirely necessary that schools should be established, in which the young, while they be taught letters, should also be taught the principles of faith and morals." But this and subsequent recommendations had no very marked effect, and Catholic schools were not common until after 1884, when the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore ordered a parochial school to be erected near each church within two years and threatened

with removal any priest who neglected this command. The Council further decreed that "all Catholic parents are bound to send their children to the parochial schools, unless either at home or in other Catholic schools they may sufficiently and evidently provide for the Christian education of their children or unless it be lawful to send them to other schools on account of a sufficient cause approved by the bishop and with opportune cautions and remedies."

The *Pastoral Letter* of the Third Plenary Council declared that "the public school system is controlled absolutely by Protestants, conducted on Protestant principles and made an instrument for debauching the faith of Catholic children who enter the walls of state institutions." Many Catholics of that period went so far as to deny the right of the State to any share in education. They asserted, for instance, that "education is none of the state's business," and referred to "this infidel, dishonest, oppressive and un-American system of state education."¹ They declared that "education itself is the business of the spiritual society alone, not of secular society. The instruction of children and youth is included in the Sacrament of Orders

¹ *American Catholic Quarterly*, April, 1884, p. 245.

and the State usurps the functions of the spiritual society when it turns educator.”¹

But this extreme view received a heavy blow in 1891 from the Reverend Thomas Bouquillon, Professor of Moral Theology in the Catholic University at Washington, in a pamphlet entitled *Education: To Whom Does It Belong?* In this he established by abundant citations from the church authorities themselves that “education belongs to individuals isolated and collected, to the family, to the state, to the church: to these four together, to none of them exclusively. Such is the theoretical doctrine. The practical application of it demands the combination, more or less harmonious, of these four interested parties in the work of the schools.”

Though Dr. Bouquillon’s contention that the State had some rights in education raised a storm of opposition from more rigorous Catholics, his view gradually gained ground. In consequence the earlier attitude of intolerance and hostility toward the public school has become much ameliorated. In spite of the rapid growth of the parish school system, about half of the Catholic children now attend the public schools, and sometimes more

The Tablet; quoted in *Putnam’s Magazine*, December, 1869.

than half of the teachers in the public schools are Catholic women. In one of our great cities the percentage of Catholic teachers has risen as high as 85 per cent.¹

Two notable attempts — known as the “Poughkeepsie Plan” and the “Faribault Plan” — have been made to throw part of the burden of the support of the Catholic schools upon the State. At Poughkeepsie, New York, the city school board in 1873 took over two Catholic schools for a nominal rental and employed the same nuns as teachers. The arrangement lasted till 1899, when it was decided to be unconstitutional. In 1891 a similar plan, devised by Archbishop Ireland, was put into effect at Faribault and Stillwater, Minnesota. The parish school buildings were leased for a year to the state authorities. The same teachers, belonging to the order of St. Dominic, were retained and received \$50 a month from the public school board in place of their former small compensation. After hearing mass in the parish church, the children were marched into the classrooms. After school closed in the afternoon they were instructed in the catechism for one hour. No text-books to which the Archbishop objected were to be used.

¹ *Proceedings*, Catholic Educational Association (1917), p. 234.

But the Faribault attempt at compromise was attacked from both the Protestant and Catholic sides as virtual surrender to the opposition. The German Catholic press was virulent in its criticism of Archbishop Ireland,¹ and his opponents carried the question up to Rome. The decision, *Tolerari potest*, of the Pope and Propaganda, delivered on April 21, 1892, declared that, "while the decrees of the Baltimore Councils on parochial schools are maintained in full vigor, the arrangement entered into by the Most Reverend John Ireland as to the schools of Faribault and Stillwater, all things considered, can be tolerated." This decision gave little satisfaction to either party and did not encourage the continuation of such efforts to combine the parochial and public school systems.

After the two organizations agreed to keep apart they got on better together. The habit of the sisterhoods is now commonly seen on the campus of State Universities or institutions of Protestant foundation, and the convent schools contain many girls from Protestant or Hebrew families. The Catholic high schools voluntarily submit to inspection

¹ For instance the Buffalo *Christliche Welt* of October 9, 1891, said: "If the Devil and his grandmother can enjoy themselves at all they must have danced a real Irish jig when the parochial school at Faribault was given over to the State."

from the State University authorities in order to qualify as accredited schools which have the privilege of sending their graduates to the State Universities without examination at entrance. About half of the graduates of Catholic high schools who enter college go to non-Catholic institutions. About two-thirds of the Catholic girls who seek secondary education are in non-Catholic institutions.¹ The official Catholic Directory for 1919 reports 5788 parish schools with 1,633,599 children attending. There are 215 Catholic colleges for boys and 674 academies for girls. But in considering these figures it is necessary to note that "many of these so-called colleges have never had a single college student" and only 84 have any students above the high school grade.² The rivalry between the different dioceses and teaching orders has had the same effect as the rivalry between the different towns and Protestant sects in leading to an excessive multiplication of weak and inadequate colleges.

The efforts of Catholic educators are now being directed toward raising the standard of their

¹ Burns, *Catholic Education*, 1917.

² Reverend W. J. Bergin in *Proceedings of the Catholic Educational Association*, 1917, p. 62.

institutions to make them true to their name and better able to meet the demands of modern life. In this movement the Catholic University of America at Washington has taken a leading part. This institution was established in 1887 by Pope Leo XIII in the Apostolic Letter *Magni nobis gaudii* and includes a School of Science with engineering courses, as well as Schools of Sacred, Philosophical, and Social Sciences. Located near it and affiliated with it are houses of the Paulist Fathers, Marists, Franciscans, Sulpicians, Dominicans, and other orders. The University conducts a summer school for Catholic women teachers and corrects the examination papers of the 160 Catholic high schools accepting its standard curriculum.

In establishing and supporting its independent educational system from the primary school to the graduate university, the Catholic Church has had the advantage of being able to command the services of some forty thousand men and women of religious orders who devote themselves to teaching on less than half the salary of public school teachers. Nine-tenths of the teachers in the Catholic schools and colleges belong to religious orders or institutes. The Jesuits have the most colleges, the Benedictines

next, and the Christian Brothers third. The last named, the Institute of Brothers of the Christian Schools, is a society of teachers not taking Holy Orders, founded at Rheims in 1680 by St. Jean Baptiste de La Salle. In order not to come into competition with the Jesuits the Christian Brothers were forbidden to teach Latin. This restricted them to a less fashionable and less profitable field, but the whirligig of time has tended to reverse the advantage, for today in the United States classical education is less in demand than English and engineering courses.

The segregation of the sexes above the elementary grades is a feature of Catholic education that distinguishes it from the prevailing American practice. The Reverend Francis Cassilly, S. J., of St. Xavier College, Cincinnati, says¹: "Co-education and female teaching in boys' high schools are radically wrong from a pedagogical, a civil, and a religious standpoint."

An important field of the Catholic schools in the past has been in the education of the children of immigrants, and for this reason the instruction has often been given in foreign tongues and by

¹ *Bulletin Catholic Educational Association*, February, 1912, p. 30.

European teachers. But the Great War, by slackening the tide of immigration and accelerating the process of Americanization, has tended to obliterate this characteristic of Catholic education.

CHAPTER XIV

THE RISE OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION

We believe that in the schools of applied science and technology as they are carried on today in the United States, involving the thorough and most scholarly study of principles directed immediately upon useful arts, and rising, in their higher grades, into original investigation and research, is to be found almost the perfection of education for young men. — *Francis A. Walker.*

AGRICULTURE and fishing were at first the principal industries of the American colonies, and the mother country discouraged rather than favored efforts to establish others. American enterprise was restricted by the navigation and trade laws enacted early in the reign of Charles II and supplemented by later measures, and it was also limited by restrictions on the right to manufacture freely. The iron and beaver-hat industries, if not destroyed by British legislation, were held down within narrow limits. To restrictions on colonial trade and industry were added irritating taxation and prohibitions on paper money. It was such arbitrary interference with their economic independence that

led the colonists to turn to the idea of political independence.

Besides the artificial and legislative restrictions imposed upon manufactures and commerce by the mother country, the natural impediments in the way of establishing industries in a new land were often insurmountable. Resources were undeveloped, and the population was scanty and scattered. Skilled mechanics were hard to get, even when there was capital to employ them. Colonists who possessed some degree of knowledge of industrial processes had little chance to exercise their technical ability and so to transmit it to the next generation.

It was because the ministers of New England were appalled by the thought that their flocks would be left to an unlettered ministry that they established colleges for the education of their successors. It was also perceived that the younger generation was likely to grow up idle and ignorant for lack of training in the trades. The first public school law, the Massachusetts Ordinance of 1642, deals with the training of children "in learning and labor." It insists that they be taught "to read and understand the principles of religion and the capital laws of this country," and it also stipulates that

they be provided with hemp and flax and "the tools and implements for working out the same."

The early educational laws of the other colonies also lay stress upon the importance of training in the crafts, but all relied, as was the custom in England, upon the apprentice system to carry it out. Where the educational needs of the apprentice conflicted with the financial interests of the master, however, the latter were likely to receive first consideration. For the master the educational system provided no substitute. The world was slow to bridge the gap between pure science and applied science, and there were few who realized in the eighteenth century that the university professor might teach the crafts without lowering his dignity. Jefferson was one of the few. His ambitious design for a State University included "a school of technical philosophy" with a very comprehensive kind of university extension. Jefferson believed that:

To such a school will come the mariner, carpenter, shipwright, pump maker, clock maker, mechanist, optician, metallurgist, founder, cutler, druggist, brewer, vintner, distiller, dyer, painter, bleacher, soap maker, tanner, powder maker, salt maker, glass maker to learn as much as shall be necessary to pursue their art understandingly of the sciences of geometry, mechanics, statics, hydrostatics, hydraulics, hydrodynamics,

navigation, astronomy, geography, optics, pneumatics, acoustics, physics, chemistry, natural history, botany, mineralogy, and pharmacy.

But Jefferson did not live to see such a school established, and indeed it would be hard to find one even today which the mariner, the carpenter, and their kind could attend with the assurance of finding the needed instruction.

For professor of agriculture in the university of which he was the founder or, as he preferred to be called, the "father," Jefferson picked out Arthur Young. It was a pity that he could not get this excellent man to serve, for the observant author of *Travels in France* and *Annals of Agriculture* might have done a great deal for the American farmer. The sage of Monticello also tried to start the systematic acclimatization of useful plants, and during the last twenty-three years of his life he regularly received from his friend Thonin, superintendent of the Jardin des Plantes in Paris, a box of exotic seeds which he distributed to various public and private gardens.

Both Jefferson and Franklin during their residence in France became imbued with the doctrines of the physiocratic school, which held that agriculture was the only real productive industry and that

manufacture and commerce were of secondary importance to a nation. Franklin believed that sciences could be best learned by practicing them. Accordingly, in his project for the "Publick Academy" in Philadelphia, he suggested the importance of field-work in agriculture:

While they are reading natural history, might not a little gardening, planting, grafting and inoculating be taught and practiced; and now and then excursions made to the neighboring plantations of the best farmers, their methods observed and reasoned upon for the information of youth; the improvement of agriculture being useful to all, and skill in it no disparagement to any?

Notwithstanding the diffident way in which Franklin introduces this revolutionary suggestion, we may infer that he was quite positive about its value and very determined to put it through, for in his *Autobiography* he has told us why he found it politic to modify the dogmatic manner of his youth and to state a proposal tentatively in order to secure its acceptance.

Franklin in his Academy at Philadelphia and Jefferson in the University of Virginia tried to attract public attention to industrial and especially agricultural education, but both failed. Other men of foresight renewed the effort. In 1819 Simeon

DeWitt, who was for fifty years Surveyor General of New York State, published a pamphlet entitled *Considerations on the Necessity of Establishing an Agricultural College and having more of the Children of Wealthy Citizens educated for the Profession of Farming*, in which he puts the situation clearly:

There are now thousands of wealthy citizens in this state who do not know what to do with their sons. In the first place, without any determinate object in view, they give them a liberal education, or rather, they send them for four years to a college to obtain the reputation of having a graduate's diploma, and so much instruction in the dead languages and the ordinary sciences as they are compelled or disposed to attend to; after that there are only three professions from which ordinarily they are to choose their means of living and rising into consequence — *law*, *physic*, and *divinity*; but so great are the numbers of young gentlemen destined for these professions, that their prospects are truly dismal; but what other provision can their fathers make for them? Turn them to some mechanic employment? that is considered too degrading; To manufacturing? it has been tried and proved ruinous; To mercantile business? that too is overstocked; To the army and navy? there is little room there, and many reasons against it. To farming? nothing, it is said, can be made by it.

The author then proposes a good sensible plan for an agricultural college, with farm work for the

students and — what some such institutions have tried to get along without — a “Professor of Practical Agriculture,” besides the professor of chemistry, botany, and other sciences. DeWitt was more than fifty years ahead of his time, for it was not until after the Civil War that the necessity for educating for “the profession of farming” was generally recognized. But his *alma mater*, Queens College, then a classical and sectarian institution under the control of the Dutch Reformed Church, has now been transformed into Rutgers College, the agricultural college of New Jersey, and much the sort of an institution he desired.

One of the first acts of the new State of Maine was to incorporate in 1822 the Gardiner Lyceum “to give mechanics and farmers such an education as will enable them to become skilled in their professions.”¹ Although the Gardiner Lyceum lived only ten years, it did not live in vain. Its second principal, John H. Lathrop, served later as president of three State Universities in the West — Missouri, Indiana, and Wisconsin. Its first “permanent instructor in agriculture,” Ezekiel Holmes, only a week before his death in 1865, managed to persuade the Maine Legislature to pass an act

¹ *Journal of the Franklin Institute*, 1895.

establishing the College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, which became the University of Maine, the first State University in New England.

One is reminded of the parable of the sower. How many seeds fall by the wayside and upon the rocky places! How many times the ground has to be seeded before a crop comes up! It seems that only one idea bears fruit out of a million of the same sort. Among the few that did not perish but visibly took root at once was the report of President Wayland to the Corporation of Brown University in 1850. After showing that the twelve colleges of New England had fewer students than ten years before, although endowments had increased and fees had been reduced, the report proceeded to give the reason for this state of affairs:

Our colleges are not filled because we do not furnish the education desired by the people. . . . We have produced an article for which the demand is diminishing. We sell it at less than cost and the deficiency is made up by charity. We give it away and still the demand diminishes. We have in this country one hundred and twenty colleges, forty-two theological seminaries, and forty-seven law schools, and we have not a single institution designed to furnish the agriculturist, the manufacturer, the mechanic, or the merchant with the education that will prepare him for the profession to which his life will be devoted.

Trustees of colleges were not accustomed to being talked to in that tone. Great was the indignation aroused by Wayland's arraignment. But the fault was now pointed out so clearly that it could not be ignored. It was one of omission rather than of commission. The university in medieval times was started with the practical and proper purpose of training for the three learned professions — theology, law, and medicine. It had continued to perform this service with increasing efficiency but had not observed that with the advance of science there had arisen a new learned profession called, for lack of a better name, engineering. This required as long and systematic training as the older professions and was not devoid of a cultural value of its own, but no adequate facilities had as yet been provided for it. So long as nine-tenths of the graduates became preachers, lawyers, and doctors, the college had no reason to pay much attention to the rest. But when this proportion was reversed, evidently the institution was being run in the interests of the minority.

The first branch of this new profession to demand attention was naturally land surveying, and the surveyors were usually among the foremost in urging the extension of education to include applied

science, especially agriculture. To Washington and DeWitt, already mentioned, another surveyor must now be added — Stephen Van Rensselaer, a descendant of the Dutch patroon of that name who was granted a wide domain in the Hudson Valley. It was Stephen Van Rensselaer who first proposed the Erie Canal and, as State Commissioner, made the first survey for it in 1811. He offered to donate land for a college of agriculture and mechanic arts on the Fellenberg plan if the State would establish such an institution.¹ When the New York Legislature refused, he took it upon himself to found at Troy a school “for the purpose of instructing persons who may choose to apply themselves in the application of science to the common purposes of life.” The Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, which was thus opened in 1825, developed only twenty-five years later into a full four-year school of engineering. The principal object of the founder was rather a training school for teachers for what today would be called the “short course” or “extension work” in agricultural and domestic science. Rensselaer’s idea of how the sciences should be taught

¹ A brief but excellent survey of the early efforts at the education of engineers will be found in *Columbia University Quarterly*, December, 1916.

is interesting: "These are not to be taught by seeing experiments and hearing lectures according to the usual methods. But they are to lecture and experiment by turns, under the immediate direction of the professor or competent assistant. Thus, by a term of labor, like an apprentice to a trade, they are to become operative chemists." The "Rensselaer plan" of student demonstrations spread rapidly to other schools and may be regarded as the precursor of the modern laboratory methods and of the close connection between school and shop which has been established in recent times at Cincinnati, Gary, and elsewhere.

But the idea has a longer genealogy than that, and we must here consider influences emanating from Switzerland and Germany which had much to do with the development of industrial education in the United States. Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, inspired by Rousseau's theory of natural education, conceived a method of teaching by means of "object lessons" in place of the traditional verbal instruction and tried to combine manual with mental labor. Pestalozzi in turn inspired three other great educators who in the early years of the nineteenth century worked out different sides of his doctrine. Froebel devoted himself to the

training of children and developed the kindergarten, which was introduced into the United States about 1870. Herbart developed the psychological principles of the new education in Germany which, when brought to America in the nineties, effected a thorough reformation of methods of instruction. The third of the disciples of Pestalozzi was a rich Swiss aristocrat, Philipp Emanuel von Fellenberg, who seized upon the idea of a democratic and practical system of education in which the children of rich and poor should study and work together and develop all their faculties through useful labor. With this object he started a "farm-school" at Hofwyl, near Bern, in 1806, and before many years similar industrial institutions had sprung up in Switzerland and Germany. The movement was taken up enthusiastically and spread in the United States by the Society for Promoting Manual Labor in Literary Institutions. Theological seminaries, following the lead of Andover in 1826, introduced manual labor "for invigorating and preserving health, without any reference to pecuniary profit." Robert Dale Owen, trained at Hofwyl, made it a feature of his communistic colony at New Harmony, Indiana. But as manual labor was extensively adopted in charitable and reformatory

institutions, this addition to the curriculum naturally did not tend to remove the prejudice prevailing in academic circles against the use of the hands.

As a result of these various attempts to found Fellenberg schools in America, it was soon realized that the expectation of making the institutions self-supporting by student labor was fallacious. The kind and amount of work that the unskilled youth could do in time spared from his studies proved too insufficient to be profitable. The school either failed altogether or, if it prospered, the irksome manual labor was gradually eliminated until only an academy or college of the traditional literary type remained. In cases where the vocational aspect gained the predominance, an engineering or trade school resulted. Manual training with a purely educational aim has been retained in city schools and is a common feature of the upper grades. The Swedish sloyd and the Russian system have had their day and left their traces. The Tuskegee Institute for negroes, founded in Alabama in 1881 by Booker T. Washington, perhaps most nearly approaches the type toward which the Fellenberg movement pointed.

Wayland's arraignment of higher education was

not much overdrawn. Up to the middle of the nineteenth century the educational needs of the farmer, the mechanic, and the engineer had been very poorly provided for. But the experiments which had failed were not altogether fruitless, and the efforts of the agricultural and industrial classes were soon to be crowned with success through the munificence of the Federal Government. To the new era inaugurated by the Morrill Act a chapter must be devoted.

CHAPTER XV

THE MORRILL ACT AND WHAT CAME OF IT

The endowment, support and maintenance of at least one college where the leading object shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies, and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in such manner as the legislatures of the States may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life. — *The Morrill Act of 1862.*

THESE seventy-five words are among the most important in the history of American education, for in every State they established institutions of a new type upon which are now expended more than \$36,000,000 of public funds every year. No other country has provided so extensive a system of industrial education or has endowed it so liberally.

It is interesting to note that in general the party favoring the protection of American industries has done most to promote the research and education upon which those industries depend. The Tariff Act of 1861 was drawn up by the same hand that

drafted the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862 for the benefit of industrial education; and the Morrill Bill, which had been vetoed by the Democratic President Buchanan, was signed three years later by Abraham Lincoln.

In an address before the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society at Milwaukee in 1859, Lincoln thus expressed his idea of industrial education:

The old general rule was that educated people did not perform manual labor. They managed to eat their bread, leaving the toil of producing it to the uneducated. . . . But free labor says "No." Free labor argues that as the Author of man makes every individual with one head and one pair of hands, it was probably intended that heads and hands should coöperate as friends, and that that particular head should direct and control that pair of hands. As each man has one mouth to be fed and one pair of hands to furnish food, it was probably intended that that particular pair of hands should feed that particular mouth, that each head is the natural guardian, director, and protector of the hands and mouth inseparably connected with it: and that being so, every head should be cultivated and improved by whatever will add to its capacity for performing its charge. In one word, free labor insists on universal education.

Agricultural societies such as Lincoln was addressing had existed for a hundred years and had long

been urging upon the deaf ears of the colleges the necessity for agricultural education. Washington, Jefferson, and Franklin were members of the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture. As early as 1799 this society, whose seal bore the motto "Venerate the Plough," considered plans for teaching the science and art of agriculture in the colleges and common schools.

Half a century later a New York society, the Mechanics Mutual Protection, started a movement for a "People's College for the purpose of promoting literature, science, arts, and agriculture" and, after ten years of agitation in which the powerful aid of Horace Greeley's *Tribune* was enlisted, obtained a charter from the Legislature in 1853. The People's College proposed to give an education more liberal than those which hitherto had monopolized the "liberal arts." The old-fashioned colleges as a rule paid scant attention to science and ignored agriculture; but the trustees of the People's College were more generously directed to "make ample provision for instruction in the classics." So, too, the Morrill Act itself expressly disclaims antagonism to the older education by the words, "without excluding classical studies."

The People's College, however, could not raise

enough money to open its doors, and until it did so the State refused help. President Brown of the People's College accordingly went to Washington to lobby for the Morrill bill. The national funds which were finally obtained through this measure went to Cornell University, which has in most respects more than fulfilled the expectations of the People's College and which was situated appropriately at Ithaca, the home of Simeon DeWitt.

Another force working toward the Morrill Act came from Illinois. Jonathan B. Turner, a professor of Illinois College, Jacksonville, presented "A Plan for an Industrial University," which was printed in the United States Patent Office *Report* of 1852; and next year the General Assembly of Illinois memorialized Congress to grant land to each State for the establishment of at least one college for agriculture and mechanic arts. The bill which was introduced by Morrill in 1857 and passed by Congress but vetoed by President Buchanan followed closely the Illinois memorial. After the bill had been vetoed by the President, Turner continued to work for it and, in the next presidential contest, obtained the promises of both Lincoln and his rival Douglas to sign the bill if it were to come before them. Lincoln was the one

to whom the opportunity came on July 2, 1862, one of the darkest days of the Civil War.

Justin S. Morrill, Vermont farmer and Congressman, was transferred to the Senate in 1867 and remained in office long enough to see the fruition of his work. The Morrill Act of 1862 gave to each State for educational purposes 30,000 acres of land for each Senator and Representative in Congress. The second Morrill Act, signed by President Harrison in 1890, gave to each State \$25,000 a year from land sales though, to prevent diversion of the funds, it limited the expenditure to instruction in agriculture, the mechanic arts, the related sciences, and the English language. The Hatch Act of 1887 gave \$15,000 a year to each State for an agricultural experiment station, and the Adams Act of 1906 doubled this appropriation. The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 appropriated funds amounting to \$4,580,000 a year to the several States on the condition of their providing equal amounts "to aid in diffusing among the people of the United States useful and practical information relating to agriculture and home economics."

Under the first Morrill Act about 13,000,000 acres of the public domain, an area nearly twice as large as Belgium, have been distributed to the

States. The total value of the nation's gifts to this form of education up to the present amounts to more than a quarter of a billion dollars. The land-grant colleges and experiment stations now number sixty-nine, for there is one or more in every State and also in the Philippines, Hawaii, and Porto Rico, and they give instruction to more than 100,000 students. Besides these colleges there are 1426 agricultural high schools.

The Morrill Act wisely left each State to decide how it should employ the land scrip bestowed upon it. In consequence the most diverse institutions sprang up. In twenty-six States new colleges of agriculture and mechanics were established. In nearly half of the States, on the other hand, the funds were turned over to an existing institution, usually the State University where there was one. In Michigan the agricultural college provided by the State Constitution of 1850 had been opened at Lansing in 1857. Maryland and Pennsylvania had each started one in 1859. These were the only State agricultural colleges established before the Morrill Act. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology at Boston, incorporated in 1861, received two-thirds of the Morrill fund of Massachusetts, while the other third went to the Agri-

cultural College opened at Amherst. Massachusetts is the only State where "agriculture and the mechanic arts" are separated.

Since the Morrill Act was passed in the midst of the Civil War it was natural that it should contain the phrase "including military tactics." These three words have had momentous consequence. The old-time "training days" had long fallen into desuetude and, except for the private military academies and West Point, there was practically no military training given to the young men of America up to the time of the Civil War. But at the outbreak of the war with Spain in 1898 the graduates of the land-grant colleges volunteered promptly, and over a thousand of them obtained commissions. By the time the United States next engaged in war there were over 25,000 such trained men.

Reference to the clause from the Morrill Act quoted at the head of this chapter will show that "agriculture and the mechanic arts" are stated to be joint objects of educational endeavor. This connection is historically correct, for the two were usually combined in movements to establish industrial schools. But the success of the movement was due to the farmers rather than to the mechanics,

for the farmers, more numerous and in the earlier years of the republic better organized, were able to exert greater political influence. Such agrarian movements as the Grange of 1867 and the People's Party of 1892, which were deeply concerned with education, aroused little sympathy among the laboring classes of the cities; on the other hand the modern labor and socialistic movement, now well organized and powerful, has so far done little for industrial education. Some labor men, in fact, have shown a disposition to look with suspicion upon trade schools, especially when founded by their employers, as a capitalistic scheme to make skilled labor cheap and plentiful. The modern trade-unionist would at any rate be strongly opposed to the idea of the older mechanic societies that students should be employed at productive labor.

The institutions that received the Morrill funds were at first quite uncertain how to spend them. It was a long time before the problem of education in "agriculture and the mechanic arts" was solved — if, indeed, it may be said to be solved yet. The land scrip, which was sometimes sold at less than its par value of \$1.25 an acre in order to realize on it at once, brought the various States sums ranging

from \$50,000 to \$750,000. This money was often wasted in unprofitable work or was spent on education other than the kind intended. To a small denominational classical college it came as a welcome windfall, yet the academic faculty were apt to fear the Federal Government as it came bearing gifts, and the students were disposed to show open contempt for the "base mechanicals" and the "cow colleges." The institution sometimes considered that it had satisfied the requirements of the law when it had hired a professor of agriculture, bought or borrowed a demonstration farm, and fitted up a shop. The rest of the money could then be used where it was most needed — to pay the salaries of the academic professors, most of whom could be made to figure in some capacity on the faculty list of the so-called "agricultural course." That *bona fide* agricultural students were sometimes few or none was not surprising and, in the minds of some of the colleagues of the professor of agriculture, not greatly to be regretted. Where the agricultural and mechanical college was distinct from the State University and even situated in another place, many of its students showed a preference for the ordinary literary and scientific courses rather than for the vocational; and, since the State University

was likely also to offer courses in engineering, the two institutions tended to overlap and become rivals. Although the land-grant colleges were founded primarily in the interests of agriculture, yet in their early days the mechanical or engineering courses attracted more students because the instruction they provided was better organized and led to more profitable positions. The complaint in consequence was made that the agricultural colleges were educating not *for* the farm but *from* the farm. They certainly did not serve to elevate the status of agriculture so long as they took the brightest boys from the farm and trained them for city occupations.

But these early defects of agricultural education have gradually been removed. The Department of Agriculture at Washington began to take a fatherly interest in the colleges and experiment stations and, by good counsel and an occasional threat of cutting off the appropriation, directed the funds into their proper channels. As the colleges developed their own methods of instruction, they gained confidence in their calling and won the respect of educators in other fields. The gap between the chemist and the botanist who were ignorant of farming and the practical farmer who was

contemptuous of "book-learning" was bridged by a new order of men with a grasp of both theory and practice. When the experiment stations demonstrated — as for instance by the milk testing and bacteriology of the dairy, by the breeding of new varieties of crops and animals, by the destruction of insect pests, and by the elimination of tuberculosis — that the endowment of scientific research paid the community in concrete coin, they had no further trouble about getting funds. Through agricultural institutions, university extension lectures, short winter courses, demonstration trains, lending libraries, correspondence courses, and franked bulletins, the land-grant colleges now reach two or three million people a year. They have come to realize that they have a wider function than training a few expert managers of big farms; they have to educate a community for country life.

The influence exerted by the Morrill Act is well set forth in the words of Liberty Hyde Bailey of Cornell, one of the first to perceive its spiritual significance and one of the largest contributors to its realization:

The Land-Grant Act is probably the most important single specific enactment ever made in the interest of education. It recognizes the principle that every

citizen is entitled to receive educational aid from the government and that the common affairs of life are proper subjects with which to educate or train men. Its provisions are so broad that the educational development of all future time may rest upon it. It expresses the final emancipation from formal, traditional and aristocratic ideas and it imposes no methods or limitations. It recognizes the democracy of education and then leaves all the means to be worked out as time goes on.¹

This beneficent legislation, passed by Congress in the darkest hour of the republic, carried into effect and combined in a practical way Washington's idea of national aid and control, Jefferson's physiocratic theory of the fundamental importance of agriculture, Franklin's plans for vocational training, and Lincoln's plea for the education of labor.

¹ *The Rise of the State Colleges of Agriculture in Cyclopedia of American Agriculture*, vol. iv.

CHAPTER XVI

WOMEN KNOCKING AT THE COLLEGE DOOR

Educate the women and the men will be educated. — *Mary Lyon.*

FOR more than two hundred years after the first colleges were established in America their doors were barred against women. Even the rudiments of education were grudgingly granted in colonial days; and, if any women were bold enough to claim the privilege of learning the things that men were encouraged to know, it was at the peril of social disapprobation. In the dame schools the little girls were taught to learn the letters from horn-books as well as from their samplers, and penmanship was more highly esteemed as a fine art than it is in these days of typewriters and dictaphones. We must remember, however, that in the manifold industries of the household — cooking, preserving, brewing, dairying, soap-making, gardening, spinning, dyeing, weaving, millinery, and dressmaking

— the girls of the colonial period had advantages for “laboratory practice” in the fundamental industries such as our million-dollar technological institutes do not afford. It was found desirable in the interests of domestic economy that they should also be taught elementary arithmetic.

In the Massachusetts Ordinance of 1642, the corner-stone of the public school system of the United States, we see the authorities grappling with the problem of coeducation, for they held “that boys and girls be not suffered to converse together, so as may occasion any wanton, dishonest or immodest behaviour.” But for the first century and a half after the settlement of the country doors of the grammar schools were kept pretty tightly closed to the weaker sex. The Hopkins School of New Haven ruled in 1684 that “all girls be excluded as improper and inconsistent with such a grammar school as ye law enjoines and as is the Designe of this settlement.” In the early part of the eighteenth century three-fourths of the women who were called upon to sign legal documents had to make their mark. After the Revolution, however, a different spirit began to prevail, and the girls were allowed to receive instruction after school. Gloucester in 1790 passed an eight-hour law for its

schoolmaster in order that he might give two hours a day "to the instruction of females — as they are a tender and interesting branch of the community but have been much neglected in the public schools of this town." The selectmen of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, opened in 1773 a school where girls were taught reading, writing, arithmetic, and geography. David McClure, the Portsmouth schoolmaster, writes in his diary that he had seventy or eighty misses from seven to twenty years of age, so that he was obliged to take half of them in the forenoon and half in the afternoon, and he adds: "This is, I believe, the only female school (supported by the town) in New England and is a wise and useful institution."

We find Franklin as a boy arguing with his chum in favor of the "propriety of educating the female sex in learning and their abilities for study" and later in life recommending "the knowledge of accounts . . . for our young females, as likely to be of more use to their children, in case of widowhood, than either music or dancing, by preserving them from losses by imposition of crafty men and enabling them to continue perhaps a profitable mercantile house." But even the far-sighted Franklin could not have foreseen the modern business

office with a large part of its work done by "young females," who, in spite of their clerical duties, manage somehow to find time for "music and dancing."

New Orleans claims priority over New England in the matter of girls' schools, on the ground that in 1727 ten Ursuline sisters from Rouen established a convent school in that French colony. This school is still in existence and now gives instruction in English as well as French. Before 1750 the Moravian missionaries had maintained a school for girls in Nazareth, Pennsylvania, and in 1802 they opened a Female Academy at Salem, North Carolina. The bill that Jefferson introduced into the Virginia Assembly in 1779 provided for the free training of all free children, girls as well as boys, for three years in the three R's, but this bill did not pass. Ten years later Boston opened elementary schools for girls and in 1826 a girls' grammar school.

But for the most part and for many years after this, women had to be content with such crumbs of learning as fell from the master's table. Here and there a bright ambitious girl might borrow her brother's books and rival him in his preparatory studies, but when he went off to college she could not follow him. Before the end of the eighteenth

century Lucinda Foot was certificated as qualified for entrance to Yale but was debarred from entering. The feminine mind was thought incapable of the serious learning and logical thought involved in the study of the ancient languages, higher mathematics, and natural sciences. This belief could be held only so long as no opportunity was afforded to demonstrate the contrary. After it was found not impossible for women to acquire higher education, such a course was still held to be undesirable. In the coeducational seminaries of New York and New England all studies were theoretically open to both sexes, but a girl who insisted upon taking Greek was regarded, even down to the Civil War, much as a girl would nowadays who insisted upon playing baseball. She might do it after a fashion, but she would be looked upon as offensively masculine, and the better she did it the worse for her reputation. In the course of time the situation has been curiously reversed, and now in some of our coeducational colleges a boy who studies Greek is regarded as effeminate.

The studies that in the early days were regarded as proper for young ladies were the English and French languages, with a cautious selection of polite literature in these languages, a little history,

or rather biography, devotional and moral reading, and such ornamental arts as music, sketching, and dancing. In science astronomy was preferred as less demoralizing than zoölogy or botany and less hard on the hands and nose than chemistry. The astronomy taught was sometimes and quite properly called "Geography of the Heavens," since it consisted largely of learning to call the constellations by their mythological names. But when Vassar, the first college for women, was opened in 1865, it could boast of possessing the second largest telescope in the United States and the greatest woman astronomer, Maria Mitchell.

The first General Assembly of Alabama in 1820 passed a bill to establish a common school in every district, an academy in every county, and a State University with a branch for "female education"; but this ambitious project was never carried out. To provide for the needs of the women of the South many seminaries, institutes, and colleges were started in the first half of the nineteenth century by Catholics, Baptists, Methodists, "Christians," Presbyterians, Masons, Odd Fellows, and private individuals.¹ Some of these institutions were for

¹ A full list of these are given in I. M. E. Blandin's *History of Higher Education of Women in the South* (1909).

girls only, and some were coeducational: Of these Elizabeth Academy, established by the Methodists in 1818 at Old Washington, Mississippi, and chartered as a college two years later, claims to have been the first in the United States to provide college training for women. Georgia Female College, chartered in 1836 and now known as the Wesleyan Female College of Macon, files a conflicting claim to be the "oldest regularly chartered institution for conferring degrees upon women in America, if not in the entire world." Three years later the Judson Female Institute was established at Marion, Alabama, by the Reverend Milo P. Jewett, afterwards President of Vassar College.

While the South was thus striving to open educational opportunities to women, the North was making similar efforts and ultimately achieved greater success. In 1818 Mrs. Emma Hart Willard, wife of a college professor of Middlebury, published an *Address to the Public* outlining *A Plan for Improving Female Education* which was at once bold and practical. Though, as she said, "the absurdity of sending ladies to college may, at first thought, strike every one to whom this subject shall be proposed," there were some men to whom the idea did not seem an "absurdity." Adams of

Massachusetts and Jefferson of Virginia favored the idea, and a bill appropriating \$2000 was introduced into the New York Legislature. This measure passed the Senate but failed in the Assembly. But the city of Troy raised \$4000 and established in 1821 the institution that is today known as the Emma Willard Seminary.

In 1822 Catherine Esther Beecher founded the Hartford Female Seminary, which was for many years the leading school for the higher education of women in America. The daughter of Lyman Beecher and sharing the brilliant gifts of his unique family, Catherine did not lack the enthusiasm, initiative, and originality necessary to a pioneer in unpopular enterprises. She organized a Female Seminary in Cincinnati, lectured in the South and West on the subject of education, especially for women, and wrote several stimulating and suggestive books. One of her hobbies was training in domestic science in order "that women may be healthful, intelligent, and successful wives, mothers, and housekeepers." But nowadays this specialized study of "household engineering" is common in all coeducational institutions and is being introduced into the colleges for women.

But neither Mrs. Willard nor Miss Beecher was

so successful as a young teacher associated with them in these pioneer enterprises, a lively, good-humored, fast talking, untidy, red-headed, rosy cheeked, pious country girl named Mary Lyon. None knew better than she the value of an education, for few had worked so hard for one. Mary Lyon was born in Buckland, Massachusetts, in 1797. Her father died when she was six, leaving the widow to run the mountain farm with the aid of her six daughters and one son aged thirteen. When she was ten years old, Mary got a chance to work for her board at Ashfield and attend school. At sixteen she was teaching school for seventy-five cents a week and board — a good teacher, although not quite secure in her position because she laughed too easily. But she saved all her salary and by the time she was twenty she had earned enough more by spinning, dyeing, and weaving to pay for her tuition at Sanderson Academy in Ashfield. “No one could study like Mary Lyon and no one could clean the schoolroom with such dispatch,” said a fellow-student. When she applied for instruction in Latin, the teacher tried to discourage her by putting into her hands a Latin grammar as she left the school on Friday night, but Mary turned up Monday morning with much of it learned by heart

and with a troubled conscience for having infringed the fourth commandment. She proved to be the most brilliant classical scholar of the academy, and although she worked night and day, often with only four hours' sleep, nothing weakened her health and enthusiasm. She put herself through a rigorous process of self-training to correct the defects of her childhood and to learn to speak grammatically, dress neatly, and avoid eccentricities in order that she might achieve the aim of her life, the establishment of an institution where women could get a higher education than had been hitherto open to them. She was quick to catch and apply new ideas in education. The Pestalozzian principle of engaging the active interest of the pupil by concrete and objective methods appealed particularly to her, and she adopted it while teaching at Buckland. History she taught as a living thing. Mental arithmetic was her hobby. The experimental method of teaching chemistry she acquired at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute at Troy where, as we have seen, the founder insisted upon it from the start. Rensselaer, founded to give instruction to boys and girls in agriculture and mechanic arts, subsequently dropped both the agriculture and the girls but fortunately not before it had educated

Mary Lyon. For further knowledge of chemistry and physics she was indebted to Professor Edward Hitchcock of Amherst College.

Thus equipped as a teacher, but without money or influential friends and in the face of popular and professional prejudice, she started upon the appalling task of raising money for an unprecedented undertaking. In three years she had raised \$68,500 and had put up buildings at South Hadley, Massachusetts. Though she was told that no girls would come to such an institution, she provided accommodations for eighty-five. On opening the doors in 1837 she took in over a hundred girls and had to turn away many more. The infant institution was christened "Mount Holyoke Female Seminary" in preference to "The Pangynækean" as Professor Hitchcock proposed to call it. W. S. Tyler, a trustee of Mount Holyoke Seminary and later of Smith, says of the criticism it encountered: "It was unnatural, unphilosophical, unscriptural, unpractical and impracticable, unfeminine and anti-Christian, in short all the epithets in the dictionary that begin with 'un-' and 'in-' and 'anti-' were hurled against it and heaped upon it."

Mary Lyon was not deceived by the prevailing

fallacy of the day that an institution could be made self-supporting by employing the students at productive labor but, being a believer in the gospel of work, she planned to have the necessary housework of the establishment done by the girls themselves in order that they might reduce expenses, get exercise, and, when they later became mistresses of their own home, be free "from servile dependence on common domestics." The work required of students at Mount Holyoke, however, was gradually reduced to the care of their own rooms, and now even this requirement has been dropped.

For a dozen years after Mount Holyoke was opened, Miss Lyon remained to manage its affairs, inspire its teachers, and give the girls the benefit of her sensible philosophy of life. She used to warn them that it is "the mark of a weak mind to be continually comparing the sexes and disputing and making out the female sex as something great and superior." And again she said: "Never teach the immortal mind for money. If money-making is your object, be milliners or dressmakers, but teaching is a sacred, not a mercenary employment." What she preached she practiced. She never received more than \$260 a year for teaching. She never wrote a book or even an article on educa-

tional methodology. Yet she is accounted one of the great American educators.

Although Mount Holyoke Seminary was a great step in advance, it did not yet offer women the opportunity for collegiate education. It was not chartered as a college until 1888, and it was five years after that before it was fully prepared to carry on collegiate instruction. For the first true colleges open to women we must turn to the West and especially to an institution which, though widely different from the New England seminary in most respects, was yet founded in the same spirit of democracy, economy, piety, and industry. Oberlin Collegiate Institute, named after the Alsatian pastor and founder of infant schools, Jean Frédéric Oberlin, was started in the wilderness of Ohio by two Congregational home missionaries, John J. Shipherd and Philo P. Stewart, who planned a novel kind of collegiate community with many of the advantages of individual land ownership. The colonists signing the "Oberlin Covenant" agreed "to hold and manage our estates personally but pledge a perfect community of interest as though we held a community of property." Like others, the institution was intended to be self-supporting through the manual labor of the students for four

hours a day; and, like others, it failed in this respect. The community farm, sawmill, flour-mill, and workshop were later sold, and the colony idea was abandoned, but the institute nevertheless survived all vicissitudes. Few if any colleges have had so much opposition to contend with, because few if any have so radically opposed the prevailing ideas of their day. The intentions of the founders are set forth in their first report as follows:

The grand object is the diffusion of useful science, sound morality, and pure religion among the growing multitudes of the Mississippi valley. It aims also at bearing an important part in extending these blessings to the destitute millions that overspread the earth. For this purpose it proposes as its primary object the thorough education of ministers and pious school teachers; as a secondary object the elevation of female character. And as a third general design, the education of the common people with the higher classes in such a manner as suits the nature of republican institutions.

This was an ambitious programme for a little wooden building in a clearing of the backwoods of Ohio, but the most remarkable thing about it is that the programme has been carried out. In 1833 Oberlin opened with twenty-nine men and fifteen women. Thus was started the first coeducational

college in the world. By 1839 it challenged comparison with the best colleges by publishing in its catalogue the Yale curriculum in parallel column with its own. Seventy-nine women had received the A.B. degree at Oberlin before 1865 when Vassar, the first women's college, opened; and two hundred and ninety had passed through the ladies' seminary course there. The radicalism of Oberlin did not stop with the admission of women: it admitted negroes as students. In the same year, 1834, when Oberlin opened its doors to freedmen, Miss Prudence Crandall was indicted and imprisoned in Canterbury, Connecticut, for maintaining a "school for colored misses" contrary to a special act of the Legislature. Oberlin also, because of its abolition principles, was in danger of destruction by mob violence, and its funds were for a time cut off. But the first president of Oberlin, the Reverend Asa Mahan, a graduate of Hamilton College and Andover Theological Seminary, was an uncompromising champion of free speech and equal rights. He had been a trustee in Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati but seceded from that institution with four-fifths of the students because they were forbidden to discuss the question of slavery. The second president of Oberlin, the

Reverend Charles G. Finney, was in his way no less radical. He was a converted lawyer, "permanently retained by Jesus Christ" as he put it, and one of the foremost evangelists of his day. After building the Broadway Tabernacle in New York, he went West to become professor of theology in Oberlin and later president. There he had to meet a double opposition — from the church because of his heretical views, and from the populace because of his teetotalism. But in spite of everything Oberlin stuck to its principles and thrived on persecution. Today it is a prosperous college of some two thousand students and — since the world has caught up with it — scarcely distinguishable from neighboring institutions.

Other colleges in Ohio and adjacent States followed the path that Oberlin had broken. Horace Mann adopted coeducation when he founded Antioch College, Ohio, in 1853. Other pioneer institutions which deserve honorable mention for their admission of women are, without reference to their disputed claims of priority: Lawrence College at Appleton, Wisconsin (opened 1849); Cornell College at Mount Vernon, Iowa (1857); Baker University at Baldwin, Kansas (1858); and Lombard University at Galesburg, Illinois (1851). Nearly

all of the State Universities were coeducational from the start: Iowa, 1856, Washington, 1862, Kansas, 1866, Minnesota, 1868; and the others one by one adopted this system before the end of the century. In all the Western States women now have access to higher education on practically the same terms as men.

In the East, however, it was different. The old colleges refused to open their doors to women, and many of them are still closed. It was therefore found to be necessary and deemed to be desirable to open separate colleges for women. To Matthew Vassar, a millionaire brewer of Poughkeepsie, New York, it occurred — or was suggested by his friend, the Reverend Milo P. Jewett — “that woman, having received from her Creator the same intellectual constitution as man, has the same right as man to intellectual culture and development.” This right — the most important because the most fundamental of woman’s rights — was denied almost everywhere in 1850, but today nearly every State affords full and free opportunities for collegiate and university education.

It was Vassar’s intention “to build and endow a college for women that shall be to them what Yale and Harvard are to young men,” and he carried

out this intention. "Vassar Female College" was chartered in 1861 and opened in 1865. In the words of Miss M. Carey Thomas, president of Bryn Mawr,¹ "in Vassar we have the legitimate parent of all future colleges for women which were to be founded in such rapid succession in the next period." These, like Vassar, owe their existence mainly to the beneficence of some wealthy philanthropist. Wellesley College, founded near Boston by Henry F. Durant "for the glory of God by the education and culture of women," was opened in 1875. Smith College at Northampton, Massachusetts, founded by the bequest of half a million by Miss Sophia Smith, was also opened in 1875. Bryn Mawr College, founded by Joseph W. Taylor at Bryn Mawr, near Philadelphia, and chartered in 1880, was in operation five years later. Wells College at Aurora, New York, was founded by Henry Wells and E. R. Morgan and was chartered as a college in 1870.

In spite of these and other separate colleges for women, the demand for the admission of women to the opportunities of the great universities became so great that some provision had to be made for

¹ *Education of Women in Butler's Monographs on Education in the United States.*

them. A women's "Annex" to Harvard which was started in 1879 developed by 1894 into Radcliffe College, affiliated with Harvard University. Barnard College for women, which forms a part of Columbia University, began its work in 1889.

In various ways, according to the social conditions and ideals prevailing in different localities, the need for the higher education of women has been met. Coeducation is not popular, or at least not fashionable, in the East; but there are in New York State alone three coeducational universities of over six thousand students each — Cornell, Syracuse, and New York. All the leading universities of the country, East or West, with the exception of Princeton and some Catholic institutions, admit women to summer schools or make other provision for them. At Columbia and Yale women are admitted to the regular graduate course on the same terms as men.

Of the 563 colleges and universities listed in the 1916 Report of the United States Commissioner of Education about sixty per cent are coeducational, twenty-five per cent are for men only, and fifteen per cent are for women only. Of the institutions that exclude women more than a third are Roman Catholic, and many of the others are technical

schools or theological seminaries. Coeducational schools now provide about ninety-six per cent of the elementary education and ninety per cent of the secondary education in the United States. The attendance of women at institutions of higher education has more than doubled since 1893. The trend for three decades is shown by the following figures:

ENROLLMENT OF WOMEN

	<i>In women's colleges</i>	<i>In coeducational colleges</i>
1893	12,300	13,058
1903	16,744	26,990
1913	19,142	55,564

If we regard the high schools as giving a liberal education — and some of them are better than the colleges of a hundred years ago — more women than men are being liberally educated. The apprehensions formerly entertained of physical, mental, and moral injury to women through college work have been proved illusory by a half century of experience, and the only questions now under discussion concern the place and the character of such education.

CHAPTER XVII

THE NEW EDUCATION

The democracy which proclaims equality of opportunity as its ideal requires an education in which learning and social application, ideas and practice, work and recognition of the meaning of what is done, are united from the beginning and for all. — *John Dewey.*

WHAT is “the new education?” And why is it called “new”? The second question is perhaps harder to answer than the first. The new education is distinguished by the broadness of its course of study. It is probable that the boy or girl of ten in a good city school is now learning a greater variety of interesting and important things than the average university student of a century ago. Public education began with what may be called the “tool” subjects — reading, writing, and arithmetic — because they are chiefly important as instruments in the acquisition and use of information rather than bodies of knowledge in themselves. Then in the early days of the republic there were added “information” or “content” subjects, such

as geography, history, and natural science. In very recent years what may be called "self-expression" subjects, including music, drawing, cooking, carpentry, and calisthenics, were introduced into the schools as fast as public opinion would permit. All these have their practical side and in a sense are "tool" subjects as truly as the three R's, but they are also designed to provide an opportunity for a motor response which would balance the abstract and bookish studies and give the child who thinks in concrete terms a chance to show practical ability and constructive skill.

More significant than the change in the curriculum is the alteration which took place in the relation between teacher and pupil. The attempt to reduce an active child to a state of passive obedience in which he would offer the least resistance to the information poured into him has largely given place to an attempt on the part of the teacher to entice the dull or shy youngster into activity. The old schoolroom motto was: "Don't speak until you are spoken to!" The new motto might well be: "Tell me what your thought's like."

Finally, the new education postpones the introduction of a new subject until the child can understand its use in his own life. There can be no

question of the soundness of the principle that the form in which instruction is given should always take into consideration the age of the child and his interests at that age, although once in a while the teacher is disconcerted by finding a pupil who advances too rapidly in the scale of evolution and who wants to read Alexander Pope when he "ought" to be enraptured with Indian life as depicted in *Hiawatha*.

To a great extent the new education is new only in the sense that the school now teaches what once was learned outside its walls. The twentieth century lad who learns at school to swim, to play ball, to build bird-houses, to care for a vegetable garden, or to mend a broken lock, and the girl who studies cooking, sewing, housework, first aid to the injured, and piano practice, may graduate no wiser than the children of a past generation who did all these things on the farm and went to school for a few weeks in winter to learn spelling and copper-plate penmanship. The new methods in education are largely based on principles that have been the commonplaces of educational theorists for generations. But it is not often that the theorist and the practical teacher are one. In America, especially, the new education has come into existence from the

actual experience of teachers who had a genuine love of children and an experimental habit of mind but very little educational tradition behind them. America has produced several great school organizers and many great teachers but less than her share of distinguished educational philosophers. The little republic of Switzerland, which was the birthplace of Rousseau and Pestalozzi and which gave to this country our most inspiring teacher of zoölogy, Louis Agassiz, and the man who revolutionized the teaching of geography in our schools, Arnold Guyot, has made a greater proportionate contribution to educational science than the United States. America has achieved distinction chiefly in the realization of educational reforms in current practice. And this we owe not only to such leaders as Mann, Barnard, and Clinton, but to the faithful work of the rank and file of teachers in school and college.

Very rarely have even the ablest teachers risen to a place in history, unless they came into prominence by their public activities or their productive scholarship or after leaving the profession. When they have become famous as teachers it is usually because their genius has been reflected in the reputation attained by their pupils in more spectacular

fields. While Mark Hopkins, to select but one example, was President of Williams College, there were graduated men later prominent in varied fields: Supreme Court Justice Stephen J. Field; David A. Wells, the economist; William Keith Brooks, the zoölogist; James H. Canfield, the librarian; Senator John J. Ingalls of Kansas; General Samuel C. Armstrong, founder of Hampton Institute; and President James A. Garfield. Garfield paid to his old college president the famous tribute that a student on one end of a log and Mark Hopkins on the other would make a university anywhere. We might also include in this list of Williams men two popular authors, Eugene Field and E. P. Roe, although they did not stay to take their degrees. The mention of General Armstrong suggests another good example of what one might term "educational heredity," for it was at Hampton Institute that Booker T. Washington received his education, and he in turn taught in Tuskegee Institute many of the leaders of the negro race and the educators of yet another generation.

From the American teachers who have introduced new methods into the schools it seems an injustice to select any, because there is no State in the Union and probably no large community that

cannot remember the coming of a teacher whom pupils and parents recognized as "different," who turned courses of study upside down, introduced novel methods, and broke down the barriers which custom had erected between the teacher and the taught. The careers of very few must be taken as typical of the lives and work of many, equally devoted and equally successful.

One of the names that comes most easily to mind is that of Edward Austin Sheldon, who founded the normal school at Oswego, New York. He did not begin his career, however, by teaching educational method but by teaching the children of the slums to read and write. While living in Oswego he was much affected by the misery of the city poor and even more so by their ignorance. He helped to found a "Free School Association" and was rewarded for his efforts by being chosen as school-master at three hundred dollars a year. What the youngsters thought of his teaching may best be summarized in the words of his daughter: "As my father went to work of a morning his warm-hearted Irish children trooped about him, seizing him by the fingers or the coat-tails, wherever they could best catch hold, to the great amusement of the storekeepers and the passers-by."

So well did the free school in Oswego prosper that Sheldon was called to be superintendent of schools in the city of Syracuse and later in Oswego. As superintendent in these two cities, he made the school system a means to the education of the teachers as well as the children. His great reform was in decreasing the use of the text-book and increasing the use of object lessons. No teacher could longer shelter incompetence with the speller and the geography and reduce the art of instruction to routine question and answer. From behind the fallen breastworks of the book emerged a human being, the teacher, who entered into a personal relationship with the children and taught from his own knowledge and with his own skill.

Using the experience he had gathered as a teacher and a school superintendent, Edward Sheldon started a normal school in 1861. The new methods of instruction had one disadvantage as compared with the old; they were not fool-proof. Anybody could teach geology or botany from a book, but to teach such subjects from specimens required skill to prevent instruction from degenerating into the presentation of a mere assortment of unrelated scraps of fact. Therefore schoolmasters who were simply told by a superintendent

that the time had come to introduce the "object method" in their classes were often wholly at a loss how to set about doing it. To meet this need the Oswego normal school was founded. It was not the first normal school in the country, but it was for its time the most influential, not only because of the new methods introduced but even more from the inspiring presence of Sheldon and the able corps of assistants whom he brought to the school from different parts of the country and from foreign nations. Edward Sheldon remained head of the school until his death in 1897.

One of the most radical innovators who ever taught in an American school was the gentle New England philosopher, Amos Bronson Alcott. Alcott was born on a Connecticut farm, but he spent much of his youth peddling books through the South. Returning to Connecticut in 1823, he took up school teaching — the usual trade in those days for a bookish Yankee who did not know just what use he could make of his talents. In his school at Cheshire he forthwith began to try various experiments. He abolished the old long benches and gave a separate seat and desk to every scholar, introduced the use of blackboards, and started a school library. He gave gymnastics and nature

study a far more prominent place in the course of study than had been the custom even in the best schools. Perhaps the greatest change he introduced was in the method of discipline. He shared the task of keeping order with his pupils by instituting school "juries" to try offenses against the rules. Definite offices were assigned to the children, such as superintendent, recorder, librarian, and conservator. Within a few years from the beginning of his pedagogical career Alcott had attained the distinction of teaching what was called "the best common School in this State, perhaps in the United States." In return for his labors, Alcott received nation-wide fame and twenty-seven dollars a month.

But such prosperity could not continue. So many reforms at once aroused the fears of anxious parents that Alcott was using his school to try out pet theories on their children while neglecting the fundamentals of sound knowledge and strict discipline. Forced to resume his travels, Alcott undertook teaching in Boston, in Philadelphia, and in several smaller cities, but his obstinate refusal to compromise with the kind of education which parents usually expected made it impossible for him to hold one position for any great length of time.

Emerson said of this "American Pestalozzi," as he was sometimes called: "Alcott declares that a teacher is one who can assist the child in obeying his own mind. . . . He measures ages by leaders and reckons history by Pythagoras, Plato, Jesus — and Pestalozzi. In his own school in Boston when he had made the schoolroom beautiful he looked on the work as half done."

What sort of education Alcott had in mind when he opened his school at the Masonic Temple at Boston may be seen in quotations from his diary of 1835:

In addition to the statuary and painting at the school-room I added today a fine cast of Silence. It will aid me in the work of discipline. . . . I have sent to England for copies of *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Fairy Queen*, since fine copies of neither could be found in Boston. . . . Except in my own school, I know of no provision for the culture of the imagination by specific tuition anywhere in our country; I seldom hear anyone speak of the importance of cultivating it. And yet, if any fact be settled by history, it is that imagination has been the guiding impulse of society.

If Alcott had lived to attend the normal schools and teachers' institutes of the twentieth century he would have heard no lack of talk of the "importance of cultivating the imagination," and he might

even have found schools where the child who can write a fairy story receives more commendation than an unimaginative classmate whose fancy does not soar beyond the multiplication table. But in Alcott's day repression rather than self-expression was the road to learning, and few understood his daring paradox: "The true teacher defends his pupils against his own personal influence."

But in fitting up his school so handsomely Alcott had broken not only precedents but pocketbook. After five years the Temple School came to an end, chiefly because he had offended the community by admitting a colored girl to his class and by writing *Conversations with Children on the Gospels*, a Socratic dialogue which strayed too widely from the path of orthodoxy and conventionality. A distinguished Harvard professor was quoted as saying that "one-third of Mr. Alcott's book was absurd, one-third blasphemous, and one-third obscene."

Discouraged by these repeated failures, Alcott abandoned teaching in the formal sense of the word, and devoted the rest of his life to lecturing, writing, and conversation. At one time he experimented with a communistic colony, "Fruitlands," where philosophic discourse might be combined with

outdoor life and a strict vegetarian diet. Lowell well summed up his friend Alcott in the lines:

For his highest conceit of a happiest state is
Where they'd live upon acorns and hear him talk
gratis;
And indeed, I believe, no man ever talked better.

His daughter, Louisa May Alcott, made use of these scholastic and communistic experiences in her *Little Men* and *Transcendental Wild Oats*.¹

An equally radical but much more influential and practical teacher was Colonel Parker. Like many other educational reformers, Francis Wayland Parker was himself educated in a country district school and began his teaching career on the lowest rung of the educational ladder, when a lad of only sixteen, in the schools of his native State of New Hampshire. A few years later he was called to be a principal in Carrolton, Illinois, where the schools were reputed to be unusually "tough." Here he showed himself to be the very man for the place, but his career was interrupted by the outbreak of the Civil War. Parker enlisted as a private and left the army as a brevet colonel with a brilliant war record.

¹ *A. Bronson Alcott. His Life and Philosophy*, by F. B. Sanborn and W. T. Harris (1893).

After the war, Colonel Parker returned to his old profession and taught in New Hampshire and in Dayton, Ohio. In 1872 he went to Germany, then the fountain-head of educational lore, and on his return he became superintendent of schools at Quincy, Massachusetts. Here he found opportunities which any school reformer might envy, for the local school board, under the leadership of Charles Francis Adams, one of the most distinguished and influential of New England statesmen, gave Parker unlimited power and unhesitating support. He dropped the speller, the reader, the grammar, and the copy-book from the schools, and had the use of the English language taught by means of ordinary books and papers. Natural history, with classes both indoors and out, he made a leading part of the school work even in the lowest grades. But Parker's most striking innovation was the encouragement which he gave to the teachers of Quincy to make experiments on their own account. Too frequently the reforming superintendent is a martinet who uses his authority to force others to carry out his plans blindly and who resents any self-assertion from the teacher as disloyalty. Superintendent Parker, however, was a welcome visitor to teacher and pupil alike when

he entered a classroom, crayon in hand, to give a demonstration lesson. He sometimes told a teacher who had ventured on school reforms that awoke resentment among the conservative: "If they get after you, they must take me first."

It was not long before Quincy became the most interesting town in the country to students of education, and for a time some six thousand visitors came every year to Quincy to study the schools and the methods of teaching. Popularity at last became too much of an interruption to the regular work, the teachers and pupils felt that they were on exhibition all day long, and the school board was obliged to limit the number of visitors. After five years in Quincy, Colonel Parker went to Boston and then to Chicago, where he was principal of the Cook County Normal School. Parker once again found himself the storm-center of a great controversy. He insisted upon excluding from entrance to the normal school persons without a good high school education and this step, though in line with the demand of the times for a higher standard in the teaching profession, was widely resented.

There were many, also, who were suspicious of the attempts to teach without the text-book in the lower grades. It was not forgotten that a principal

had once asked Colonel Parker: "Do you mean to say that, if the school board made the children buy spelling books and take them to school, you wouldn't use them?" "Oh, yes," said the genial Colonel, "I'd use them; of course I would; I'd put 'em into the stove and heat the house with them."

After some years of agitation and debate the city of Chicago took over the Cook County Normal School, and soon thereafter Colonel Parker became head of the Chicago Institute, which later became part of the University of Chicago. The School of Education of that University soon became famous through the work of John Dewey, who has perhaps done more to spread the ideals of the new education among the teachers of America than any other living educator. Dewey brought to the task what most of the earlier reformers had lacked, a thorough knowledge of the science of psychology upon which educational theory and practice must be based and a full realization of the social importance of education.¹

The value of the changes made in recent years in the subjects and methods of teaching in American schools must await the verdict of the final

¹ For a sketch of the life and educational ideals of John Dewey see the author's *Six Major Prophets* (1917).

court of public opinion, and this opinion must be based upon experience. Some of the critics of modern education have expressed the fear that, by overloading the curriculum and laying less emphasis on memory drill, the teachers of today permit their pupils to enter business life or college with very shaky ideas as to the multiplication table and incapable of writing a correctly spelled letter without the aid of a dictionary. The charge of deterioration is plausible, but the evidence to prove it is lacking. Indeed, an interesting experiment carried out a few years ago at Springfield, Massachusetts, seems to indicate the contrary. A set of old examination papers, grades and all, was unearthed and used for the examination of a large class of school children. The marks given on the test to the twentieth century children in such "fundamental" studies as spelling, arithmetic, and geography showed a great improvement over the grades made by their forefathers.

Another charge brought against the school of today is that it is wholly "feminized," owing to coeducation and the almost universal employment of women teachers in the elementary grades. In the four decades from 1870 to 1910 the number of male teachers in the common schools increased by

41 per cent and the number of female teachers by 190 per cent. This change has been due in part to the disappearance of the prejudices which kept women from professional life and in part to the failure of the school authorities to raise salaries rapidly enough to attract competent men to teach in the primary and elementary grades. One member of the British Mosely Commission, which visited the United States to study the schools, declared that the low average of attainment in our high schools could be traced to "the preponderance of women teachers," and that to the same cause might be attributed the deplorable fact that "the boy in America is not being brought up to punch another boy's head or to stand having his own punched in a healthy and proper manner." Without questioning this British standard of manliness, one may nevertheless note that, during this period of "feminization," athletics have had a phenomenal growth and that the world's championship in most of the sports has passed into American hands.

More serious than the complaints of a too elaborate course of study and of too much femininity in the school is the charge that the modern school permits the machinery of a "system" to eclipse

the common sense of the classroom. Thus the plan so well worked out by William A. Wirt in Gary, Indiana, for a school day which combined study, play, and work, can be made a mere device for keeping every part of the school building in use and so avoiding the expense of new construction. The idea of education for citizenship by an active study of the industries upon which our civilization depends for its existence, rightly advocated by such educational leaders as Charles W. Eliot and John Dewey, may easily in mechanical hands degenerate into children's polytechnics. We all know how much educational malpractice can go on behind such impressive names as Froebel and Montessori! But all this simply emphasizes the fact, as true of the old education as of the new, that education is at bottom simply an affair of the interesting teacher and the interested pupil, and that the libraries, laboratories, costly equipment, text-books, school laws, and school methods are but so many opportunities for the two to get together. On the whole, it is beyond question that teacher and pupil now understand each other more quickly and can benefit each other more completely because of the good work done by such men as Sheldon, Alcott, Parker, Dewey, and their fellow reformers.

The United States has been throughout its history an educational experiment station on a continental scale. The diversity of local control, the parallel systems of public and private institutions from kindergarten to university, and the freedom of the frontier communities from tradition have given opportunity for that variation which is essential to all evolution. Visiting educators from countries such as France and Germany, where the schools are strictly regulated and centrally controlled, are amazed and amused to find some schools far in advance of their own in equipment and ideals, while others are using crude and primitive methods elsewhere abandoned. But this differentiation has made it possible to compare the working of various plans in a way that would be impossible in a country where greater uniformity is enforced. Education, since it consists largely in transmitting to the rising generation the accumulated wisdom of the past, is essentially a process of conservation, and therefore educators have a natural tendency to become conservative. But American educators have been comparatively free from this tendency and have, indeed, sometimes erred on the other side. They are quick to adopt — at least in name — new methods from overseas

and to borrow bright ideas from one another. If a school superintendent introduces some educational novelty, though it may not be altogether original or very revolutionary, the fame of it speedily spreads through the land, and other cities take it up in their eagerness to be in the van of progress. The voluminous educational literature, the frequent teachers' meetings, the county institutes, and the educational associations afford opportunity for this rapid contagion of ideas. Such a readiness to change plans sometimes leads to confusion and loss of energy. A child who has to alter the style of his handwriting two or three times is not likely to leave school a good penman. It has been found necessary to check by legislation the disposition to change text-books every year on the theory that the latest must be the best. But although mutability may be a defect of the American temperament, it is also one of the main factors in the national progress. If education is to keep pace with material advance, the teacher must be as ready as the manufacturer to scrap a piece of antiquated machinery.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE UNIVERSITY OF TODAY

Popular education is necessary for the preservation of those conditions of freedom, political and social, which are indispensable to free individual development. — *Woodrow Wilson*.

THE development of educational institutions in America has come in part through the normal growth and multiplication of earlier foundations. In some instances a transformation so complete has been effected as to make the old institution unrecognizable in the new. This is especially the case with the university. There were "universities" from the beginning of American nationality, yet the word in its European and modern sense could hardly be applied to any American institution until ten years after the Civil War, when graduate and professional work of a high order began to be undertaken. The German degree of Doctor of Philosophy was granted for the first time in America at Yale in 1861. Harvard adopted this

degree in 1872 and Columbia in 1884. The American colleges formerly followed the custom of the English in granting the degree of Master of Arts "in course" to almost anybody who was willing to pay for it three years after graduation. But in 1874 Yale established the requirement of at least one year of graduate study, and this has since become the general rule. The degree of Doctor of Philosophy now stands for several years of graduate work including original research. In 1916 American universities granted this degree to 607 persons; and more than half of these degrees were conferred in the sciences — that is, in subjects which were not fully received into the curriculum until the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

The Centennial Year, 1876, which celebrated the breaking of the political bonds with England, may well serve as the date when the American colleges definitely threw off their subservience to the English collegiate tradition. This turning point is marked by the establishment of Johns Hopkins University, which was chiefly devoted, after the model of the German university, to graduate study and research and which admits the newer physical and political sciences to equal rank with the older linguistic subjects. The leading Eastern

colleges set about developing their graduate departments, and one by one they began to call themselves "universities," while the State Universities of the West strove to live up to their names. By far the greater part of the graduate work of the country is done in the endowed universities such as Columbia, Chicago, Harvard, Yale, Johns Hopkins, Cornell, Pennsylvania, and Clark, though some of the State Universities such as Wisconsin, Illinois, California, and Michigan are sharing largely in this training.

The era of splendid generosity that set in during the later eighties transformed the older institutions and added such new ones as Clark University of Worcester, Massachusetts, founded by Jonas G. Clark; the University of Chicago, founded by John D. Rockefeller; and Leland Stanford, Junior, University, founded by Senator Leland Stanford of California. These three universities, opened between 1889 and 1892, were so well endowed by their founders that from the start they took equal rank with institutions a century or more older.

As patrons of the universities usually preferred to have their donations take the tangible form of buildings, there soon arose new classrooms, laboratories, chapels, libraries, and dormitories that quite

outshone the more primitive and utilitarian structures of earlier days. Formerly buildings had been put up one by one at long intervals as the needs of the institution demanded and its funds permitted. The campus of an old college thus became a sort of architectural museum with specimens of the changing fashions of a century. But when gifts of millions came in at one time it was possible to plan harmonious groups. The University of Chicago adopted for all its buildings the English collegiate Gothic in gray limestone and Stanford University an Hispanic Romanesque style in red and yellow with mosaic inlays. Harvard erected a unified group of five marble buildings for its medical school, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1916 moved to a new site on the Cambridge bank of the Charles River, where a group of buildings in classic style has been erected.

The imitation of Oxford and Cambridge models as shown in the new buildings of Princeton, Chicago, Pennsylvania, and elsewhere is indicative of a tendency to turn again to England for educational ideals. Residential halls and common rooms were established in many places in order to get something of the English college atmosphere, and Princeton introduced a preceptorial system of per-

sonal instruction in small groups suggested by the tutorial system of the older British universities.

With increasing wealth and luxury on the part of the universities came a desire for ceremonial display. Commencement ceremonies which had dropped into desuetude were revived and elaborated. Academic costumes of the medieval style were introduced or invented. The fashion spread like wildfire from East to West, and in a few years mortar-board caps and gorgeous gowns were to be seen on almost every campus in the country.

Coincident and connected with the rise of ceremonial was the development of athletics. In the early days colleges were disposed to frown upon student sports and in some cases, as at Princeton, tried to prohibit them; but in the latter part of the nineteenth century public games became recognized by the college authorities as the most effective form of advertising and by the students as the quickest road to fame. A gymnasium came to be considered as necessary as a library, and more money was spent on a single football game or boat race than would formerly have sufficed to run the college for a year. In the modern American university the stadium has assumed an importance

and popularity such as it has not enjoyed since the fall of Rome and Byzantium.

The dominant power in undergraduate social life of today is the fraternity, a unique feature of the American college, though it corresponds in a way to the corps of the German universities. We have already noted the founding, at old William and Mary in the Year of Independence, of the first Greek-letter society, Phi Beta Kappa, as a philosophical and patriotic organization. In consequence of the anti-masonic agitation of 1826 Phi Beta Kappa abandoned its ritualism and secrecy and is now simply an honorary fraternity admitting about a tenth of the seniors, men and women alike, on the ground of scholarship. But in 1826-27, even when the popular opposition to secret societies was most fierce, three fraternities — Kappa Alpha, Sigma Phi, and Delta Phi — were founded at Union College, and from this center the movement spread rapidly though secretly to the New York and New England colleges. Since then the fraternities have continued to thrive and multiply, although at times college authorities, State Legislatures, and "barbarian" students have tried to suppress them. At the present time there are over two hundred fraternities and sororities, some

academic and some professional, some local and some national, certain of which have as many as seventy-five local chapters. These societies which were once outlaws now receive practically official status in the college organization and, instead of meeting in woods and cellars, are allowed to have their handsome chapter-houses on the campus. A few institutions like Princeton retain the old prohibition, but at Princeton upper-class dining clubs have grown up which have a strong resemblance to the Greek-letter fraternities. During the last quarter of a century the membership of the national fraternities has risen from 72,000 to about 270,000, of whom 30,000 are women. They own or rent 1100 chapter-houses valued at \$8,000,000.

The chief characteristics of the recent period of American education are expansion and diversification. Higher education has burst through the four walls and four years that formerly confined it and has overflowed the land. The number of students studying the classics increases year by year, but the number studying new subjects increases much more rapidly. The older colleges in the country are thriving and doing better work than ever, but the city institutions have expanded more rapidly.

The rigid requirements for entrance to college

and the prescribed course afterwards were broken down, and the elective system provided a place for new studies. The efforts of Jefferson to introduce election into Virginia and of George Ticknor to do the same for Harvard had been, as we have seen, unsuccessful; but, when Charles William Eliot, a chemist with radical ideas in education, became President of Harvard in 1869, he was able in the course of the next twenty-five years to provide for a completely elective system. The example of Harvard was followed somewhat hesitatingly by almost all the others.

Another university president of similar initiative, William Rainey Harper, had the opportunity in the University of Chicago of creating a new institution instead of reforming an old one and was thus able to introduce many innovations that have been generally adopted. One of these, the continuation of college work throughout the summer, enables the ambitious student to complete a four years' course in three and gives teachers from other institutions an opportunity to carry on graduate work. The university of Chicago imported the idea of extension courses from Oxford and also established correspondence courses. Other agencies for making education accessible to the largest

possible number of students Harper derived from the Chautauqua Institution, in which he had long been active. The Chautauqua movement started in a camp-meeting of Sunday School teachers at Chautauqua Lake, New York, in 1874. Similar assemblies were established in other States and not only served to stimulate interest in systematic reading but afforded a platform for the free discussion of public questions that has had as great an influence over politics as the earlier lyceum movement. From the platform of the Chautauqua assemblies held every year it is possible to speak to five million people.

It is usual now for the city universities to give public lecture courses, provide evening classes, and otherwise extend their privileges to those not enrolled as regular students. Through the initiative of the late Dr. Henry M. Leipziger, the City of New York has established a system in the school buildings of free evening lectures which are attended by a million adult auditors a year.

Besides stimulating and satisfying the educational demands of the American people, the universities have extended their influence to foreigners, both by drawing them to this country and by establishing schools in other lands. As the home

missionary movement started most of the colleges west of the Alleghanies, so the foreign missionaries carried the American college around the world. In China there are eighteen colleges and universities established by American missionaries. In Turkey the American schools accommodate five thousand collegiate students. Such institutions as Robert College and the American College for Girls at Constantinople and the Syrian Protestant College at Beirut have trained the leaders of the new nationalities emerging from the chaos of the Great War.

The sudden extension of American sovereignty in 1898 over eight million Filipinos, mostly illiterate, brought a new demand upon the American school system to which it has nobly responded. The Government undertook the unprecedented task of teaching the whole of the rising generation a new language. Before the cannon were cool, schools had been opened with soldier teachers. The first Philippine Commission called for a thousand schoolmasters to be sent from America, and these volunteer teachers followed closely behind the volunteer army as it progressed in the pacification of the archipelago. More than \$3,000,000 a year is now spent on education in the Philippines.

This is seven times as much in proportion to the population as the Dutch spend in Java and six times as much as the British spend in India for that purpose.

When Japan was opened to the world by Commodore Perry in 1854, American missionaries and teachers took an active part in the work of regeneration during the Era of Meiji or Enlightenment. The mission schools soon began to send back students who often beat the American boys in their own field. The Japanese were later followed by Chinese in still larger numbers, owing in part to the remission of \$12,700,000 of the Boxer indemnity on the understanding that the Chinese Government would employ it in sending Chinese students to America. There are now about 2000 Chinese in American preparatory schools and colleges taking chiefly engineering and the industrial sciences.

More recently students from India began to come in large numbers. They are not usually, like the Japanese and Chinese, sent with the aid or encouragement of the Government but on the contrary are largely nationalists opposed to the British rule. Naturally many young people come from Hawaii, the Philippines, Porto Rico, and Cuba to be educated in the States, and more than formerly

are coming from South America, especially Brazil. Owing again to mission schools, Armenian, Syrian, Turk, Persian, and Bulgarian students are here by the hundreds. These divers nationalities are usually organized, together with a limited number of American students, into Cosmopolitan Clubs, and this association during the period of life when friendships are formed most easily has done much to cultivate what President Butler calls "the international mind" in American universities.

The Great War proved what had sometimes been questioned — that the United States was a united people. In spite of the diversity of racial elements and family connections with all the belligerent nationalities in Europe, the youth of this country responded with little hesitation to the call to arms. Few European countries showed such unanimity of opinion in this crisis. The process of Americanization had been more complete than even the optimistic had hoped; and the chief credit for this belongs to the public school system.

Americans had a double duty laid upon them. They had to educate not only their own children but also the immigrants. Though the latter might not be illiterate, they had usually to be taught the

English language and American ideals. No people ever had such a task as this before — to assimilate a million foreigners a year — and it is perhaps the finest thing which could be said of the American school that it has with almost incredible completeness accomplished this gigantic feat of naturalization through education.

The pay-roll of an American coal mine or steel works today reads like an ethnological map of the Balkans, yet the children of the workmen are thoroughly Americanized. Feuds two thousand years old, based on racial, religious, and linguistic differences, are here wiped out in a single generation. The tourist traveling a thousand miles across the United States will observe less contrast in costume and custom, in dialect and mode of thought, than he would while traveling a hundred miles in many parts of Europe. Yet the American school is not a leveling machine. Its aim is not the suppression but rather the cultivation of natural diversity. The “melting-pot” metaphor does not mean that sometime there is to be poured out a homogeneous alloy to solidify like the nations of the Old World. The melting-pot is to be kept melting. The American idea is to maintain the mass constantly fluid so that individual particles may rise and fall accord-

ing to their specific gravity. Americanization means the obliteration of the nationalistic, traditional, and class distinctions of Europe in order that the real and personal distinctions may develop. Equality, in the American sense of the word, is not an end but a beginning. It means that, so far as the State can do it, all children shall start in the race of life on an even line. The chief agency for this purpose is the public school system; and this aim has already been so far accomplished that in a large part of the country a youth of sufficient ability to profit by the opportunity can get any education he needs, up to the highest professional training, without spending any money other than what he can make by his own exertions during his course.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

THE most useful single work of reference on education in America is the *Cyclopedia of Education* (1911-13), 5 vols., edited by Paul Monroe, Professor of the History of Education in Columbia University. The articles by more than a thousand individual contributors give a list of the best books on each topic which may be used as a guide to further reading. The annual *Report of the United States Commissioner of Education* (usually obtainable from Washington for the asking) is now issued in two volumes: the first contains reports of all important movements in education here and abroad, with accounts or abstracts of conventions, surveys, legislation, books, and similar matter; the second volume contains the statistics of schools of all grades. These volumes really form an annual encyclopedia and current history of education. Besides this work, the Bureau of Education publishes various historical monographs in the form of circulars and bulletins and a monthly bibliography of educational literature.

The series of twenty brief monographs on *Education in the United States* (1900), 2 vols., prepared under the editorship of Nicholas Murray Butler, President of Columbia University, for the Paris Exposition of 1900, gives a survey of the field at that date with some

historical background. Those who wish to explore more thoroughly the byways of educational history will find of interest the special studies in the volumes of Henry Barnard's *American Journal of Education* (1855-1882), 32 vols. Richard G. Boone's *Education in the United States* (1889) and Edwin G. Dexter's *History of Education in the United States* (1904) are detailed chronicles in the general field of American education. But for later and more adequate studies the reader should consult the monographs in the Columbia University *Contributions to Philosophy, Psychology, and Education*; and Columbia University, Teachers College, *Contributions to Education*. A valuable special study on land grants and other public endowments is Frank Blackmar's *History of Federal and State Aid to Higher Education* (1890).

Three useful works by Frank Pierrepont Graves of the University of Pennsylvania — *The History of Education in Modern Times* (1913), *A Student's History of Education* (1915), and *Great Educators of Three Centuries* (1912) — relate American education with the educational history of Europe. In this connection should also be mentioned Will S. Monroe's important *History of the Pestalozzian Movement in the United States* (1907). *The History of Higher Education in America* (1906), by Charles F. Thwing of Western Reserve University, is a good narrative of college and university development made especially interesting by quotations from contemporaries and by accounts of college life. For those interested in the relation of American education to the strife of political parties and social classes no better book could be recommended than Frank Tracy Carlton's *Economic*

Influences upon Educational Progress in the United States, 1820-1850 (1908).

For contemporaneous records and pictures of school life the reader can find what he wants in such books as W. H. Small's *Early New England Schools* (1914), Clifton Johnson's *Old Time Schools and School Books* (1904), and Emily N. Vanderpoel's *Chronicles of a Pioneer School* (1903).

A. E. Winship's *Great American Educators* (1900), a volume of brief biographies for school reading, will be found by adults quite as profitable as less interesting books. Those who care to study more closely the lives of leading educators will find available abundant material impossible to list in this place. Few educators of note have gone without their Boswell, and some, such as Horace Mann, have become the theme of a veritable library. There are also special histories for every important college and university. *Great American Universities* (1909), by Edwin E. Slosson, gives journalistic impressions of fourteen leading American institutions.

On Catholic education the reader should consult *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (1907-12), 15 vols.; the works of the Reverend James A. Burns, *The Catholic School System in the United States* (1908), *Catholic Education* (1917), and *Growth and Development of the Catholic School System in the United States* (1912); and also the *History of the Catholic Church in the United States* by J. G. Shea (1886-92), 4 vols. The fascinating story of the Kentucky pioneer priests may be found in *Sketches of the Early Catholic Missions in Kentucky* (1844) by M. J. Spalding and in the lives of Nerinckx by Howlett and Maes.

For a more detailed account of the Catholic teaching communities, founded and organized by remarkable women, the reader should consult: M. A. McCann, *The History of Mother Seton's Daughters* (1917); Mary Aloysia Hardey, *Religious of the Sacred Heart* (1910); Anna B. McGill, *The Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, Kentucky* (1917); George Parsons Lathrop, *A Story of Courage* (1894); M. J. Brunowe, *The College of Mt. St. Vincent* (1917).

In the footnotes to the body of this volume the attentive reader will have found several references to other books dealing with various special topics. In addition to the biographies of educators and chronicles of schools and colleges, there are monographs on educational history for most parts of the Union and even on the school systems of important towns and cities. Will S. Monroe's *Bibliography of Education* (1897) will help the conscientious student to find his way through the forest of earlier educational literature, and the current files of educational periodicals will enable him to keep abreast with the incessant output of new works in the same field.

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PART II
THE AMERICAN SPIRIT IN
LITERATURE

A CHRONICLE
OF GREAT INTERPRETERS

BY
BLISS PERRY

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THE AMERICAN SPIRIT IN LITERATURE

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CHAPTER I

THE PIONEERS

THE United States of America has been from the beginning in a perpetual change. The physical and mental restlessness of the American and the temporary nature of many of his arrangements are largely due to the experimental character of the exploration and development of this continent. The new energies released by the settlement of the colonies were indeed guided by stern determination, wise forethought, and inventive skill; but no one has ever really known the outcome of the experiment. It is a story of faith, of

Effort, and expectation, and desire,
And something evermore about to be.

An Alexander Hamilton may urge with passionate force the adoption of the Constitution, without any firm conviction as to its permanence. The most clear-sighted American of the Civil War period recognized this element of uncertainty in our American adventure when he declared: "We are now testing whether this nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure." More than fifty years have passed since that war reaffirmed the binding force of the Constitution and apparently sealed the perpetuity of the Union. Yet the gigantic economic and social changes now in progress are serving to show that the United States has its full share of the anxieties which beset all human institutions in this daily altering world.

"We are but strangers in an inn, but passengers in a ship," said Roger Williams. This sense of the transiency of human effort, the perishable nature of human institutions, was quick in the consciousness of the gentleman adventurers and sober Puritan citizens who emigrated from England to the New World. It had been a familiar note in the poetry of that Elizabethan period which had followed with such breathless interest the exploration of America. It was a conception which could be shared alike by a saint like John Cotton or a

soldier of fortune like John Smith. Men are tent-dwellers. Today they settle here, and tomorrow they have struck camp and are gone. We are strangers and sojourners, as all our fathers were.

This instinct of the camper has stamped itself upon American life and thought. Venturesomeness, physical and moral daring, resourcefulness in emergencies, indifference to negligible details, wastefulness of materials, boundless hope and confidence in the morrow, are characteristics of the American. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the "good American" has been he who has most resembled a good camper. He has had robust health — unless or until he has abused it, — a tolerant disposition, and an ability to apply his fingers or his brain to many unrelated and unexpected tasks. He is disposed to blaze his own trail. He has a touch of prodigality, and, withal, a knack of keeping his tent or his affairs in better order than they seem. Above all, he has been ever ready to break camp when he feels the impulse to wander. He likes to be "foot-loose." If he does not build his roads as solidly as the Roman roads were built, nor his houses like the English houses, it is because he feels that he is here today and gone tomorrow. If he has squandered the physical

resources of his neighborhood, cutting the forests recklessly, exhausting the soil, surrendering water power and minerals into a few far-clutching fingers, he has done it because he expects, like Voltaire's Signor Pococurante, "to have a new garden tomorrow, built on a nobler plan." When New York State grew too crowded for Cooper's Leather-Stocking, he shouldered his pack, whistled to his dog, glanced at the sun, and struck a bee-line for the Mississippi. Nothing could be more typical of the first three hundred years of American history.

The traits of the pioneer have thus been the characteristic traits of the American in action. The memories of successive generations have tended to stress these qualities to the neglect of others. Everyone who has enjoyed the free life of the woods will confess that his own judgment upon his casual summer associates turns, quite naturally and almost exclusively, upon their characteristics as woodsmen. Out of the woods, these gentlemen may be more or less admirable divines, pedants, men of affairs; but the verdict of their companions in the forest is based chiefly upon the single question of their adaptability to the environment of the camp. Are they quick of eye and foot, skillful with rod and gun, cheerful on

rainy days, ready to do a little more than their share of drudgery? If so, memory holds them.

Some such unconscious selection as this has been at work in the classification of our representative men. The building of the nation and the literary expression of its purpose and ideals are tasks which have called forth the strength of a great variety of individuals. Some of these men have proved to be peculiarly fitted for a specific service, irrespective of the question of their general intellectual powers, or their rank as judged by the standard of European performance in the same field. Thus the battle of New Orleans, in European eyes a mere bit of frontier fighting, made Andrew Jackson a "hero" as indubitably as if he had defeated Napoleon at Waterloo. It gave him the Presidency.

The analogy holds in literature. Certain expressions of American sentiment or conviction have served to summarize or to clarify the spirit of the nation. The authors of these productions have frequently won the recognition and affection of their contemporaries by means of prose and verse quite unsuited to sustain the test of severe critical standards. Neither Longfellow's *Excelsior* nor Poe's *Bells* nor Whittier's *Maud Muller*

is among the best poems of the three writers in question, yet there was something in each of these productions which caught the fancy of a whole American generation. It expressed one phase of the national mind in a given historical period.

The historian of literature is bound to take account of this question of literary vogue, as it is highly significant of the temper of successive generations in any country. But it is of peculiar interest to the student of the literature produced in the United States. Is this literature "American," or is it "English literature in America," as Professor Wendell and other scholars have preferred to call it? I should be one of the last to minimize the enormous influence of England upon the mind and the writing of all the English-speaking countries of the globe. Yet it will be one of the purposes of the present book to indicate the existence here, even in colonial times, of a point of view differing from that of the mother country, and destined to differ increasingly with the lapse of time. Since the formation of our Federal Union, in particular, the books produced in the United States have tended to exhibit certain characteristics which differentiate them from the books produced in other English-speaking countries. We

must beware, of course, of what the late Charles Francis Adams once called the "filiopietistic" fallacy. The "American" qualities of our literature must be judged in connection with its conformity to universal standards of excellence. Tested by any universal standard, *The Scarlet Letter* is a notable romance. It has won a secure place among the literature written by men of English blood and speech. Yet to overlook the peculiarly local or provincial characteristics of this remarkable story is to miss the secret of its inspiration. It could have been written only by a New Englander, in the atmosphere of a certain epoch.

Our task, then, in this rapid review of the chief interpreters of the American spirit in literature, is a twofold one. We are primarily concerned with a procession of men, each of whom is interesting as an individual and as a writer. But we cannot watch the individuals long without perceiving the general direction of their march, the ideas that animate them, the common hopes and loyalties that make up the life of their spirit. To become aware of these general tendencies is to understand the "American" note in our national writing.

Our historians have taught us that the history of the United States is an evolution towards political

unity. The separatist, particularist movements are gradually thrust to one side. In literary history, likewise, we best remember those authors who fall into line with what we now perceive to have been the course of our literary development. The erratic men and women, the "sports" of the great experiment, are ultimately neglected by the critics, unless, like the leaders of political insurrections, those writing men and women have raised a notable standard of revolt. No doubt the apparently unique literary specimens, if clearly understood in their origins and surroundings, would be found rooted in the general laws of literary evolution. But these laws are not easy to codify and we must avoid the temptation to discover, in any particular period, more of unity than there actually was. And we must always remember that there will be beautiful prose and verse unrelated to the main national tendencies save as "the literature of escape." We owe this lesson to the genius of Edgar Allan Poe.

Let us test these principles by applying them to the earliest colonists. The first book written on the soil of what is now the United States was Captain John Smith's *True Relation* of the planting of the Virginia colony in 1607. It was published in

London in 1608. The Captain was a typical Elizabethan adventurer, with a gift, like so many of his class, for picturesque narrative. In what sense, if at all, may his writings on American topics be classified as "American" literary productions? It is clear that his experiences in the New World were only one phase of the variegated life of this English soldier of fortune. But the American imagination has persistently claimed him as representing something peculiarly ours, namely, a kind of pioneer hardihood, resourcefulness, leadership, which was essential to the exploration and conquest of the wilderness. Most of Smith's companions were unfitted for the ordeal which he survived. They perished miserably in the "starving time." But he was of the stuff from which triumphant immigrants have ever been made, and it is our recognition of the presence of these qualities in the Captain which makes us think of his books dealing with America as if they were "American books." There are other narratives by colonists temporarily residing in the Virginia plantations which gratify our historical curiosity, but which we no more consider a part of American literature than the books written by Stevenson, Kipling, and Wells during their casual visits to this country.

But Captain Smith's *True Relation* impresses us, like Mark Twain's *Roughing It*, with being somehow true to type. In each of these books the possible unveracities in detail are a confirmation of their representative American character.

In other words, we have unconsciously formulated, in the course of centuries, a general concept of "the pioneer." Novelists, poets, and historians have elaborated this conception. Nothing is more inevitable than our reaching back to the beginning of the seventeenth century and endeavoring to select, among the thousands of Englishmen who emigrated or even thought of emigrating to this country, those who possessed the genuine heart and sinew of the permanent settler.

Oliver Cromwell, for instance, is said to have thought of emigrating hither in 1637. If he had joined his friends John Cotton and Roger Williams in New England, who can doubt that the personal characteristics of "my brave Oliver" would today be identified with the "American" qualities which we discover in 1637 on the shores of Massachusetts Bay? And what an American settler Cromwell would have made!

If we turn from physical and moral daring to the

field of theological and political speculation, it is easy today to select, among the writings of the earliest colonists, certain radical utterances which seem to presage the very temper of the late eighteenth century. Pastor John Robinson's farewell address to the Pilgrims at Leyden in 1620 contained the famous words: "The Lord has more truth yet to break forth out of His holy Word. I cannot sufficiently bewail the condition of the reformed churches, who are come to a period in religion. . . . Luther and Calvin were great and shining lights in their times, yet they penetrated not into the whole counsel of God." Now John Robinson, like Oliver Cromwell, never set foot on American soil, but he is identified, none the less, with the spirit of American liberalism in religion.

In political discussion, the early emergence of that type of independence familiar to the decade 1765-75 is equally striking. In a letter written in 1818, John Adams insisted that "the principles and feelings which produced the Revolution ought to be traced back for two hundred years, and sought in the history of the country from the first plantations in America." "I have always laughed," he declared in an earlier letter, "at the affectation of representing American independence

as a novel idea, as a modern discovery, as a late invention. The idea of it as a possible thing, as a probable event, nay as a necessary and unavoidable measure, in case Great Britain should assume an unconstitutional authority over us, has been familiar to Americans from the first settlement of the country."

There is, then, a predisposition, a latent or potential Americanism which existed long before the United States came into being. Now that our political unity has become a fact, the predisposition is certain to be regarded by our own and by future generations as evidence of a state of mind which made our separate national life inevitable. Yet to Thomas Hutchinson, a sound historian and honest man, the last Royal Governor of Massachusetts, a separate national life seemed in 1770 an unspeakable error and calamity.

The seventeenth-century colonists were predominantly English, in blood, in traditions, and in impulses. Whether we look at Virginia or Plymouth or at the other colonies that were planted in swift succession along the seaboard, it is clear that we are dealing primarily with men of the English race. Most of them would have declared, with as much emphasis as Francis Hopkinson a

century later, "We of America are in all respects Englishmen." Professor Edward Channing thinks that it took a century of exposure to colonial conditions to force the English in America away from the traditions and ideals of those who continued to live in the old land. But the student of literature must keep constantly in mind that these English colonizers represented no single type of the national character. There were many men of many minds even within the contracted cabin of the *Mayflower*. The "sifted wheat" was by no means all of the same variety.

For Old England was never more torn by divergent thought and subversive act than in the period between the death of Elizabeth in 1603 and the Revolution of 1688. In this distracted time who could say what was really "English"? Was it James the First or Raleigh? Archbishop Laud or John Cotton? Charles the First or Cromwell? Charles the Second or William Penn? Was it Churchman, Presbyterian, Independent, Separatist, Quaker? One is tempted to say that the title of Ben Jonson's comedy *Every Man in his Humour* became the standard of action for two whole generations of Englishmen, and that there is no common denominator for emigrants of such

varied pattern as Smith and Sandys of Virginia, Morton of Merrymount, John Winthrop, "Sir" Christopher Gardiner and Anne Hutchinson of Boston, and Roger Williams of Providence. They seem as miscellaneous as "Kitchener's Army."

It is true that we can make certain distinctions. Virginia, as has often been said, was more like a continuation of English society, while New England represented a digression from English society. There were then, as now, "stand-patters" and "progressives." It was the second class who, while retaining very conservative notions about property, developed a fearless intellectual radicalism which has written itself into the history of the United States. But to the student of early American literature all such generalizations are of limited value. He is dealing with individual men, not with "Cavalier" or "Roundhead" as such. He has learned from recent historians to distrust any such facile classification of the first colonists. He knows by this time that there were aristocrats in Massachusetts and commoners in Virginia; that the Pilgrims of Plymouth were more tolerant than the Puritans of Boston, and that Rhode Island was more tolerant than either. Yet useful as these general statements may be, the interpreter

of men of letters must always go back of the racial type or the social system to the individual person. He recognizes, as a truth for him, that theory of creative evolution which holds that in the ascending progress of the race each thinking person becomes a species by himself.

While something is gained, then, by remembering that the racial instincts and traditions of the first colonists were overwhelmingly English, and that their political and ethical views were the product of a turbulent and distraught time, it is even more important to note how the physical situation of the colonists affected their intellectual and moral, as well as their political problems. Among the emigrants from England, as we have seen, there were great varieties of social status, religious opinion, individual motive. But at least they all possessed the physical courage and moral hardihood to risk the dangerous voyage, the fearful hardships, and the vast uncertainties of the new life. To go out at all, under the pressure of any motive, was to meet triumphantly a searching test. It was in truth a "sifting," and though a few picturesque rascals had the courage to go into exile while a few saints may have been deterred, it is a truism to say that the

pioneers were made up of brave men and braver women.

It cannot be asserted that their courage was the result of any single, dominating motive, equally operative in all of the colonies. Mrs. Hemans's familiar line about seeking "freedom to worship God" was measurably true of the Pilgrims of Plymouth, about whom she was writing. But the far more important Puritan emigration to Massachusetts under Winthrop aimed not so much at "freedom" as at the establishment of a theocracy according to the Scriptures. These men straightway denied freedom of worship, not only to newcomers who sought to join them, but to those members of their own company who developed independent ways of thinking. The list of motives for emigration ran the whole gamut, from missionary fervor for converting the savages, down through a commendable desire for gain, to the perhaps no less praiseworthy wish to escape a debtor's prison or the pillory. A few of the colonists were rich. Some were beggars or indentured servants. Most of them belonged to the middle class. John Harvard was the son of a butcher; Thomas Shepard, the son of a grocer; Roger Williams, the son of a tailor. But all three were

university bred and were natural leaders of men.

Once arrived in the wilderness, the pioneer life common to all of the colonists began instantly to exert its slow, irresistible pressure upon their minds and to mould them into certain ways of thinking and feeling. Without some perception of these modes of thought and emotion a knowledge of the spirit of our literature is impossible. Take, for instance, the mere physical situation of the first colonists, encamped on the very beach of the wide ocean with an illimitable forest in their rear. Their provisions were scanty. They grew watchful of the strange soil, of the new skies, of the unknown climate. Even upon the voyage over, John Winthrop thought that "the declination of the pole star was much, even to the view, beneath that it is in England," and that "the new moon, when it first appeared, was much smaller than at any time he had seen it in England." Here was a man evidently using his eyes with a new interest in natural phenomena. Under these changed skies the mind began gradually to change also.

At first the colonists felt themselves an outpost of Europe, a forlorn hope of the Protestant Reformation. "We shall be as a city upon a hill," said

Winthrop. "The eyes of all people are upon us." Their creed was Calvinism, then in its third generation of dominion and a European doctrine which was not merely theological but social and political. The emigrant Englishmen were soon to discover that it contained a doctrine of human rights based upon human needs. At the beginning of their novel experience they were doubtless unaware of any alteration in their theories. But they were facing a new situation, and that new situation became an immense factor in their unconscious growth. Their intellectual and moral problems shifted, as a boat shifts her ballast when the wind blows from a new quarter. The John Cotton preaching in a shed in the new Boston had come to "suffer a sea-change" from the John Cotton who had been rector of St. Botolph's splendid church in Lincolnshire. The "church without a bishop" and the "state without a king" became a different church and state from the old, however loyally the ancient forms and phrases were retained.

If the political problems of equality which were latent in Calvinism now began to take on a different meaning under the democratic conditions of pioneer life, the inner, spiritual problems of that amazing creed were intensified. "Fallen" human

nature remained the same, whether in the crowded cosmopolitan streets of Holland and London, or upon the desolate shores of Cape Cod. But the moral strain of the old insoluble conflict between "fixed fate" and "free will" was heightened by the physical loneliness of the colonists. Each soul must fight its own unaided, unending battle. In that moral solitude, as in the physical solitude of the settlers upon the far northwestern prairies of a later epoch, many a mind snapped. Unnatural tension was succeeded by unnatural crimes. But for the stronger intellects New England Calvinism became a potent spiritual gymnastic, where, as in the Swedish system of bodily training, one lifts imaginary and ever-increasing weights with imaginary and ever-increasing effort, flexor and extensor muscles pulling against one another, driven by the will. Calvinism bred athletes as well as maniacs.

The new situation, again, turned many of the theoretical speculations of the colonists into practical issues. Here, for example, was the Indian. Was he truly a child of God, possessing a soul, and, if so, had he partaken of the sin of Adam? These questions perplexed the saintly Eliot and the generous Roger Williams. But before many

years the query as to whether a Pequot warrior had a soul became suddenly less important than the practical question as to whether the Pequot should be allowed any further chances of taking the white man's scalp. On this last issue the colonists were unanimous in the negative.

It would be easy to multiply such instances of a gradual change of view. But beneath all the changes and all the varieties of individual behavior in the various colonies that began to dot the seaboard, certain qualities demanded by the new surroundings are felt in colonial life and in colonial writings. One of these is the instinct for order, or at least that degree of order essential to the existence of a camp. It was not in vain that John Smith sought to correct the early laxness at Jamestown by the stern edict: "He that will not work, neither shall he eat." Dutch and Quaker colonies taught the same inexorable maxim of thrift. Soon there was work enough for all, at good wages, but the lesson had been taught. It gave Franklin's *Poor Richard* mottoes their flavor of homely, experienced truth.

Order in daily life led straight to political order, just as the equality and resourcefulness of the frontier, stimulated by isolation from Europe, led

to political independence. The pioneer learned to make things for himself instead of sending to London for them, and by and by he grew as impatient of waiting for a political edict from London as he would become in waiting for a London plough. "This year," wrote one colonist, "ye will go to complain to the Parliament, and the next year they will send to see how it is, and the third year the government is changed." The time was coming when no more complaints would be sent.

One of the most startling instances of this colonial instinct for self-government is the case of Thomas Hooker. Trained in Emmanuel College of the old Cambridge, he arrived in the new Cambridge in 1633. He grew restless under its theocratic government, being, it was said, "a person who when he was doing his Master's work would put a king into his pocket." So he led the famous migration of 1636 from Massachusetts to Hartford, and there helped to create a federation of independent towns which made their own constitution without mentioning any king, and became one of the corner-stones of American democracy. In May, 1638, Hooker declared in a sermon before the General Court "that the choice of public magistrates belongs unto the people by God's

own allowance," and "that they who have the power to appoint officers and magistrates, it is in their power, also, to set the bounds and limitations of the power and place into which they call them." The reason of this is: "*Because the foundation of authority is laid, firstly, in the free consent of the people.*" This high discourse antedates the famous pamphlets on liberty by Milton. It is a half-century earlier than Locke's *Treatise on Government*, a century and a quarter earlier than Rousseau's *Contrat Social*, and it precedes by one hundred and thirty-eight years the American Declaration of Independence.

But the slightest acquaintance with colonial writings will reveal the fact that such political radicalism as Thomas Hooker's was accompanied by an equally striking conservatism in other directions. One of these conservative traits was the pioneer's respect for property, and particularly for the land cleared by his own toil. Gladstone once spoke of possession of the soil as the most important and most operative of all social facts. Free-footed as the pioneer colonist was, he was disinclined to part with his land without a substantial price for it. The land at his disposal was practically illimitable, but he showed a very

English tenacity in safeguarding his hold upon his own portion.

Very English, likewise, was his attachment to the old country as "home." The lighter and the more serious writings of the colonists are alike in their respect for the past. In the New England settlements, although not at first in Virginia, there was respect for learning and for an educated clergy. The colonists revered the Bible. They maintained a stubborn regard for the Common Law of England. Even amid all the excitement of a successful rebellion from the mother country, this Common Law still held the Americans to the experience of the inescapable past.

Indeed, as the reader of today lifts his eyes from the pages of the books written in America during the seventeenth century, and tries to meditate upon the general difference between them and the English books written during the same period, he will be aware of the firmness with which the conservative forces held on this side of the Atlantic. It was only one hundred years from the Great Armada of 1588 to the flight of James Second, the last of the Stuart Kings. With that Revolution of 1688 the struggles characteristic of the seventeenth century in England came to an end. A new

working basis is found for thought, politics, society, literature. But while those vast changes had been shaking England, two generations of American colonists had cleared their forests, fought the savages, organized their townships and their trade, put money in their purses, and lived, though as yet hardly suspecting it, a life that was beginning to differentiate them from the men of the Old World. We must now glance at the various aspects of this isolated life of theirs, as it is revealed in their books.

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST COLONIAL LITERATURE

THE simplest and oldest group of colonial writings is made up of records of exploration and adventure. They are like the letters written from California in 1849 to the "folks back East." Addressed to home-keeping Englishmen across the sea, they describe the new world, explain the present situation of the colonists, and express their hopes for the future. Captain John Smith's *True Relation*, already alluded to, is the typical production of this class: a swift marching book, full of eager energy, of bluff and breezy picturesqueness, and of triumphant instinct for the main chance. Like most of the Elizabethans, he cannot help poetizing in his prose. Cod-fishing is to him a "sport"; "and what sport doth yeald a more pleasing content, and lesse hurt or charge then angling with a hooke, and crossing the sweete ayre from Isle to Isle, over the silent streams of a calme Sea?" But the

gallant Captain is also capable of very plain speech, Cromwellian in its simplicity, as when he writes back to the London stockholders of the Virginia Company: "When you send again, I entreat you rather send but thirty carpenters, husbandmen, gardeners, fishermen, blacksmiths, masons, and diggers up of trees' roots, well provided, than a thousand of such as we have."

America was but an episode in the wide wanderings of Captain Smith, but he owes his place in human memory today to the physical and mental energy with which he met the demands of a new situation, and to the vividness with which he dashed down in words whatever his eyes had seen. Whether, in that agreeable passage about Pocahontas, he was guilty of romancing a little, no one really knows, but the Captain, as the first teller of this peculiarly American type of story, will continue to have an indulgent audience.

But other exiles in Virginia were skillful with the pen. William Strachey's *True Reportory of the Wrack of Sir Thomas Gates, Kt., vpon and from the islands of the Bermudas* may or may not have given a hint to Shakespeare for the storm-scene in *The Tempest*. In either case it is admirable writing, flexible, sensitive, shrewdly observant. Whitaker,

the apostle of Virginia, mingles, like many a missionary of the present day, the style of an exhorter with a keen discernment of the traits of the savage mind. George Percy, fresh from Northumberland, tells in a language as simple as Defoe's the piteous tale of five months of illness and starvation, watched by "those wild and cruel Pagans." John Pory, of "the strong potations," who thinks that "good company is the soul of this life," nevertheless comforts himself in his solitude among the "crystal rivers and odoriferous woods" by reflecting that he is escaping envy and expense. George Sandys, scholar and poet, finds his solace during a Virginia exile in continuing his translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Colonel Norwood, an adventurer who belongs to a somewhat later day, since he speaks of having "read Mr. Smith's travels," draws the long bow of narrative quite as powerfully as the redoubtable Smith, and far more smoothly, as witness his accounts of starvation on shipboard and cannibalism on shore. This Colonel is an artist who would have delighted Stevenson.

All of these early tellers of Virginia tales were Englishmen, and most of them returned to England, where their books were printed and their remaining lives were passed. But far to the north-

east of Virginia there were two colonies of men who earned the right to say, in William Bradford's quiet words, "It is not with us as with other men, whom small things can discourage, or small discontentments cause to wish themselves at home again." One was the colony of Pilgrims at Plymouth, headed by Bradford himself. The other was the Puritan colony of Massachusetts Bay, with John Winthrop as governor.

Bradford and Winthrop have left journals which are more than chronicles of adventure. They record the growth and government of a commonwealth. Both Bradford and Winthrop were natural leaders of men, grave, dignified, solid, endowed with a spirit that bred confidence. Each was learned. Winthrop, a lawyer and man of property, had a higher social standing than Bradford, who was one of the Separatists of Robinson's flock at Leyden. But the Pilgrim of the *Mayflower* and the well-to-do Puritan of the Bay Colony both wrote their annals like gentlemen and scholars. Bradford's *History of Plymouth Plantation* runs from 1620 to 1647. Winthrop's diary, now printed as the *History of New England*, begins with his voyage in 1630 and closes in the year of his death, 1649. As records of an Anglo-Saxon

experiment in self-government under pioneer conditions these books are priceless; as human documents, they illuminate the Puritan character; as for "literary" value in the narrow sense of that word, neither Bradford nor Winthrop seems to have thought of literary effect. Yet the leader of the Pilgrims has passages of grave sweetness and charm, and his sketch of his associate, Elder Brewster, will bear comparison with the best English biographical writing of that century. Winthrop is perhaps more varied in tone, as he is in matter, but he writes throughout as a ruler of men should write, with "decent plainness and manly freedom." His best known pages, justly praised by Tyler and other historians of American thought, contain his speech before the General Court in 1645 on the nature of true liberty. No paragraphs written in America previous to the Revolution would have given more pleasure to Abraham Lincoln, but it is to be feared that Lincoln never saw Governor Winthrop's book, though his own ancestor, Samuel Lincoln of Hingham, lived under Winthrop's jurisdiction.

The theory of government held by the dominant party of the first two generations of New England pioneers has often been called a "theocracy,"

that is to say, a government according to the Word of God as expounded and enforced by the clergy. The experiment was doomed to ultimate failure, for it ran counter to some of the noblest instincts of human nature. But its administration was in the hands of able men. The power of the clergy was well-nigh absolute. The political organization of the township depended upon the ecclesiastical organization as long as the right to vote was confined to church members. How sacrosanct and awful was the position of the clergyman may be perceived from Hawthorne's *The Minister's Black Veil* and *The Scarlet Letter*.

Yet it must be said that men like Hooker and Cotton, Shepard and Norton, had every instinct and capacity for leadership. With the notable exception of Hooker, such men were aristocrats, holding John Winthrop's opinion that "Democracy is, among most civil nations, accounted the meanest and worst form of government." They were fiercely intolerant. The precise reason for the Hooker migration from Cambridge to Hartford in 1636 — the very year of the founding of Harvard — was prudently withheld, but it is now thought to be the instinct of escape from the clerical architects of the Cambridge Platform. Yet no one

would today call Thomas Hooker a liberal in religion, pioneer in political liberty though he proved to be. His extant sermons have the steady stroke of a great hammer, smiting at the mind and heart. "Others because they have felt the heavy hand of God . . . upon these grounds they build their hopes: 'I have had my hell in this life, and I hope to have heaven in the world to come; I hope the worst is over.'" Not so, thunders the preacher in reply: "Sodom and Gomorrah they burnt in brimstone and they shall burn in hell." One of Hooker's successors has called him "a son of thunder and a son of consolation by turns." The same may be said of Thomas Shepard, another graduate of Emmanuel College in the old Cambridge, who became the "soul-melting preacher" of the newer Cambridge by the Charles. Pure, ravishing notes of spiritual devotion still sing themselves in his pages. He is wholly Calvinist. He thinks "the truth is a poor mean thing in itself" and that the human reason cannot be "the last resolution of all doubts," which must be sought only in the written Word of God. He holds it "a tough work, a wonderful hard matter to be saved." "Jesus Christ is not got with a wet finger." Yet, like so many mystics, he yearns to be "covered

with God, as with a cloud," to be "drowned, plunged, and swallowed up with God." One hundred years later we shall find this same rhapsodic ecstasy in the meditations of Jonathan Edwards.

John Cotton, the third of the mighty men in the early Colonial pulpit, owes his fame more to his social and political influence than to his literary power. Yet even that was thought commanding. Trained, like Hooker and Shepard, at Emmanuel College, and fresh from the rectorship of St. Botolph's in the Lincolnshire Boston, John Cotton dominated that new Boston which was named in his honor. He became the Pope of the theocracy; a clever Pope and not an unkindly one. He seems to have shared some of the opinions of Anne Hutchinson, though he "pronounced the sentence of admonition" against her, says Winthrop, with much zeal and detestation of her errors. Hawthorne, in one of his ironic moods, might have done justice to this scene. Cotton was at heart too liberal for his rôle of Primate, and fate led him to persecute a man whose very name has become a symbol of victorious tolerance, Roger Williams.

Williams, known today as a friend of Cromwell, Milton, and Sir Harry Vane, had been exiled from

Massachusetts for maintaining that the civil power had no jurisdiction over conscience. This doctrine was fatal to the existence of a theocratic state dominated by the church. John Cotton was perfectly logical in "enlarging" Roger Williams into the wilderness, but he showed less than his usual discretion in attacking the quick-tempered Welshman in pamphlets. It was like asking Hotspur if he would kindly consent to fight. Back and forth the books fly, for Williams loves this game. His *Bloody Tenet of Persecution for Cause of Conscience* calls forth Mr. Cotton's *Bloody Tenet washed and made white in the Blood of the Lamb*; and this in turn provokes the torrential flood of Williams's masterpiece, *The Bloody Tenet yet more Bloody, by Mr. Cotton's endeavor to wash it white in the Blood of the Lamb*. There is glorious writing here, and its effect cannot be suggested by quoting sentences. But there is one sentence in a letter written by Williams in his old age to his fellow-townsmen of Providence which points the whole moral of the terrible mistake made by the men who sought spiritual liberty in America for themselves, only to deny that same liberty to others. "I have only one motion and petition," begs this veteran pioneer who had forded many a swollen stream and built

many a rude bridge in the Plantations: "it is this, that after you have got over the black brook of some soul bondage yourselves, you tear not down the bridge after you."

It is for such wise and humane counsels as this that Roger Williams is remembered. His opponents had mightier intellects than his, but the world has long since decided against them. Colonial sermon literature is read today chiefly by antiquarians who have no sympathy for the creed which once gave it vitality. Its theology, like the theology of *Paradise Lost* or the *Divine Comedy*, has sunk to the bottom of the black brook. But we cannot judge fairly the contemporary effect of this pulpit literature without remembering the passionate faith that made pulpit and pews co-partners in a supreme spiritual struggle. Historians properly insist upon the æsthetic poverty of the New England Puritans; that their rule of life cut them off from an enjoyment of the dramatic literature of their race, then just closing its most splendid epoch; that they had little poetry or music and no architecture and plastic art. But we must never forget that to men of their creed the Sunday sermons and the week-day "lectures" served as oratory, poetry, and drama. These

outpourings of the mind and heart of their spiritual leaders were the very stuff of human passion in its intensest forms. Puritan churchgoers, passing hours upon hours every week in rapt absorption with the noblest of all poetry and prose in the pages of their chief book, the Bible, were at least as sensitive to the beauty of words and the sweep of emotions as our contemporaries upon whose book-shelves Spenser and Milton stand unread.

It is only by entering into the psychology of the period that we can estimate its attitude towards the poetry written by the pioneers themselves. The *Bay Psalm Book* (1640), the first book printed in the colonies, is a wretched doggerel arrangement of the magnificent King James Version of the Psalms, designed to be sung in churches. Few of the New England churches could sing more than half-a-dozen tunes, and a pitch-pipe was for a long time the only musical instrument allowed. Judged as hymnology or poetry, the *Bay Psalm Book* provokes a smile. But the men and women who used it as a handbook of devotion sang it with their hearts aflame. In judging such a popular seventeenth-century poem as Wigglesworth's *Day of Doom* one must strip oneself quite free from the twentieth century, and pretend to be sitting in the

chimney-corner of a Puritan kitchen, reading aloud by that firelight which, as Lowell once humorously suggested, may have added a "livelier relish" to the poet's "premonitions of eternal combustion." Lowell could afford to laugh about it, having crossed that particular black brook. But for several generations the boys and girls of New England had read the *Day of Doom* as if Mr. Wigglesworth, the gentle and somewhat sickly minister of Malden, had veritably peeped into Hell. It is the present fashion to underestimate the power of Wigglesworth's verse. At its best it has a trampling, clattering shock like a charge of cavalry and a sound like clanging steel. Mr. Kipling and other cunning ballad-makers have imitated the peculiar rhyme structure chosen by the nervous little parson. But no living poet can move his readers to the fascinated horror once felt by the Puritans as they followed Wigglesworth's relentless gaze into the future of the soul's destiny.

Historical curiosity may still linger, of course, over other verse-writers of the period. Anne Bradstreet's poems, for instance, are not without grace and womanly sweetness, in spite of their didactic themes and portentous length. But this

lady, born in England, the daughter of Governor Dudley and later the wife of Governor Bradstreet, chose to imitate the more fantastic of the moralizing poets of England and France. There is little in her hundreds of pages which seems today the inevitable outcome of her own experience in the New World. For readers who like roughly mischievous satire, of a type initiated in England by Bishop Hall and Donne, there is *The Simple Cobbler of Agawam* written by the roving clergyman Nathaniel Ward. But he lived only a dozen years in Massachusetts, and his satirical pictures are scarcely more "American" than the satire upon German professors in *Sartor Resartus* is "German." Like Charles Dickens's *American Notes*, Ward's give the reaction of a born Englishman in the presence of the sights and the talk and the personages of the transatlantic world.

Of all the colonial writings of the seventeenth century, those that have lost least of their interest through the lapse of years are narratives of struggles with the Indians. The image of the "bloody savage" has always hovered in the background of the American imagination. Our boys and girls have "played Indian" from the beginning, and the actual Indian is still found, as for three hundred years past,

upon the frontier fringe of our civilization. Novelists like Cooper, historians like Parkman, poets like Longfellow, have dealt with the rich material offered by the life of the aborigines, but the long series begins with the scribbled story of colonists. Here are comedy and tragedy, plain narratives of trading and travel, missionary zeal and triumphs; then the inevitable alienation of the two races and the doom of the native.

The "noble savage" note may be found in John Rolfe, the husband of Pocahontas, with whom, poor fellow, his "best thoughts are so intangled and enthralled." Other Virginians, like Smith, Strachey, and Percy, show close naturalistic observation, touched with the abounding Elizabethan zest for novelties. To Alexander Whitaker, however, these "naked slaves of the devil" were "not so simple as some have supposed." He yearned and labored over their souls, as did John Eliot and Roger Williams and Daniel Gookin of New England. In the Pequot War of 1637 the grim settlers resolved to be rid of that tribe once for all, and the narratives of Captain Edward Johnson and Captain John Mason, who led in the storming and slaughter at the Indians' Mystic Fort, are as piously relentless as anything in the Old Testa-

ment. Cromwell at Drogheda, not long after, had soldiers no more merciless than these exterminating Puritans, who wished to plough their fields henceforth in peace. A generation later the storm broke again in King Philip's War. Its tales of massacre, captivity, and single-handed fighting linger in the American imagination still. Typical pamphlets are Mary Rowlandson's thrilling tale of the Lancaster massacre and her subsequent captivity, and the loud-voiced Captain Church's unvarnished description of King Philip's death. The King, shot down like a wearied bull-moose in the deep swamp, "fell upon his face in the mud and water, with his gun under him." They "drew him through the mud to the upland; and a doleful, great, naked dirty beast he looked like." The head brought only thirty shillings at Plymouth: "scanty reward and poor encouragement," thought Captain Church. William Hubbard, the minister of Ipswich, wrote a comprehensive *Narrative of the Troubles with the Indians in New England*, bringing the history down to 1677. Under the better known title of *Indian Wars*, this fervid and dramatic tale, penned in a quiet parsonage, has stirred the pulses of every succeeding generation.

The close of King Philip's War, 1676, coinciding as it does with Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia, marks an era in the development of our independent life. The events of that year, in the words of Professor Tyler, "established two very considerable facts, namely, that English colonists in America could be so provoked as to make physical resistance to the authority of England, and, second, that English colonists in America could, in the last resort, put down any combination of Indians that might be formed against them. In other words, it was then made evident that English colonists would certainly be safe in the new world, and also that they would not always be colonists."

While the end of an historical or literary era cannot always be thus conveniently indicated by a date, there is no doubt that the final quarter of the seventeenth century witnessed deep changes in the outward life and the inner temper of the colonists. The "first fine careless rapture" was over. Only a few aged men could recall the memory of the first settlements. Between the founding of Jamestown and the rebellion under the leadership of Nathaniel Bacon almost seventy years had intervened, an interval corresponding to that which separates us from the Mexican War. Roger Wil-

liams ended his much-enduring and beneficent life in the flourishing town of Providence in 1684. He had already outlived Cotton and Hooker, Shepard and Winthrop, by more than thirty years. Inevitably men began, toward the end of the century, to take stock of the great venture of colonization, to scrutinize their own history and present position, to ask searching questions of themselves. "You have better food and raiment than was in former times," wrote the aged Roger Clark, in 1676; "but have you better hearts than your forefathers had?" Thomas Walley's *Languishing Commonwealth* maintains that "Faith is dead, and Love is cold, and Zeal is gone." Urian Oakes's election sermon of 1670 in Cambridge is a condemnation of the prevalent worldliness and ostentation. This period of critical inquiry and assessment, however, also gives grounds for just pride. History, biography, eulogy, are flourishing. The reader is reminded of that epoch, one hundred and fifty years later, when the deaths of John Adams and of Thomas Jefferson, falling upon the same anniversary day, the Fourth of July, 1826, stirred all Americans to a fresh recognition of the services wrought by the Fathers of the Republic. So it was in the colonies at the close of the seventeenth cen-

tury. Old England, in one final paroxysm of political disgust, cast out the last Stuart in 1688. That Revolution marks, as we have seen, the close of a long and tragic struggle which began in the autocratic theories of James the First and in the absolutism of Charles. Almost every phase of that momentous conflict had its reverberation across the Atlantic, as the history of the granting and withdrawal of colonial charters witnesses abundantly. The American pioneers were quite aware of what was going on in England, and they praised God or grumbled, thriftily profited by the results or quietly nullified them, as the case might be. But all the time, while England was rocked to its foundations, the colonists struck steadily forward into their own independent life.

CHAPTER III

THE THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATION

WHEN the eighteenth century opened, many signs of change were in the air. The third generation of native-born Americans was becoming secularized. The theocracy of New England had failed. In the height of the tragic folly over the supposed "witchcraft" in Salem, Increase Mather and his son Cotton had held up the hands of the judges in their implacable work. But before five years had passed, Judge Sewall does public penance in church for his share of the awful blunder, desiring "to take the shame and blame of it." Robert Calef's cool pamphlet exposing the weakness of the prosecutors' case is indeed burned by Increase Mather in the Harvard Yard, but the liberal party are soon to force Mather from the Presidency and to refuse that office to his son. In the town of Boston, once hermetically sealed against heresy, there are Baptist and Episcopal churches — and a dancing-

master. Young Benjamin Franklin, born in 1706, professes a high respect for the Mathers, but he does not go to church, "Sunday being my studying day," and neither the clerical nor the secular arm of Boston is long enough and strong enough to compel that industrious apprentice into piety.

If such was the state of New England, the laxity of New York and Virginia needs little evidence. Contemporary travelers found the New Yorkers singularly attached to the things of this present world. Philadelphia was prosperous and there-with content. Virginia was a paradise with no forbidden fruit. Hugh Jones, writing of it in 1724, considers North Carolina "the refuge of runaways," and South Carolina "the delight of buccaneers and pirates," but Virginia "the happy retreat of true Britons and true Churchmen." Unluckily these Virginians, well nourished "by the plenty of the country," have "contemptible notions of England!" We shall hear from them again. In the meantime the witty William Byrd of Westover describes for us his amusing survey of the Dismal Swamp, and his excursions into North Carolina and to Governor Spotswood's iron mines, where he reads aloud to the Widow Fleming, on a rainy autumn day, three acts of the *Beggars'*

Opera, just over from London. So runs the world away, south of the Potomac. Thackeray paints it once for all, no doubt, in the opening chapters of *The Virginians*.

To discover any ambitious literary effort in this period, we must turn northward again. In the middle colonies, and especially in Philadelphia, which had now outgrown Boston in population, there was a quickened interest in education and science. But the New Englanders were still the chief makers of books. Three great names will sufficiently represent the age: Cotton Mather, a prodigy of learning whose eyes turn back fondly to the provincial past; Jonathan Edwards, perhaps the most consummate intellect of the eighteenth century; and Benjamin Franklin, certainly the most perfect exponent of its many-sided life.

When Cotton Mather was graduated from Harvard in 1678, in his sixteenth year, he was publicly complimented by President Oakes, in fulsome Latin, as the grandson of Richard Mather and John Cotton. This atmosphere of flattery, this consciousness of continuing in his own person the famous local dynasty, surrounded and sustained him to the end. He had a less commanding personality than his father Increase. His nervous sen-

sibility was excessive. His natural vanity was never subdued, though it was often chastened by trial and bitter disappointment. But, like his father, he was an omnivorous reader and a facile producer of books, carrying daily such burdens of mental and spiritual excitement as would have crushed a normal man. Increase Mather published some one hundred and fifty books and pamphlets: Cotton Mather not less than four hundred. The Rev. John Norton, in his sketch of John Cotton, remarks that "the hen, which brings not forth without uncessant sitting night and day, is an apt emblem of students." Certainly the hen is an apt emblem of the "uncessant" sitter, the credulous scratcher, the fussy cackler who produced the *Magnalia*.

Yet he had certain elements of greatness. His tribal loyalty was perfect. His ascetic devotion to his conception of religious truth was absolute. His *Diary*, which has recently been published in full, records his concern for the chief political events in Europe in his day, no less than his brooding solicitude for the welfare of his townspeople, and his agony of spirit over the lapses of his wayward eldest son. A "sincere" man, then, as Carlyle would say, at bottom; but overlaid with such

“Jewish old clothes,” such professional robings and personal plumage as makes it difficult, save in the revealing *Diary*, to see the man himself.

The *Magnalia Christi Americana*, treating the history of New England from 1620 to 1698, was published in a tall London folio of nearly 800 pages in 1702. It is divided into seven books, and proceeds, by methods entirely unique, to tell of Pilgrim and Puritan divines and governors, of Harvard College, of the churches of New England, of marvelous events, of Indian wars; and in general to justify, as only a member of the Mather dynasty could justify, the ways of God to Boston men. Hawthorne and Whittier, Longfellow and Lowell knew this book well and found much honey in the vast carcass. To have had four such readers and a biographer like Barrett Wendell must be gratifying to Cotton Mather in Paradise.

The *Diary* of Mather's fellow-townsmen Judge Samuel Sewall has been read more generally in recent years than anything written by Mather himself. It was begun in 1673, nine years earlier than the first entry in Mather's *Diary*, and it ends in 1729, while Mather's closes in 1724. As a picture of everyday happenings in New England, Sewall's *Diary* is as far superior to Mather's as

Pepys's *Diary* is to George Fox's *Journal* in painting the England of the Restoration. Samuel Sewall was an admirably solid figure, keen, forceful, honest. Most readers of his *Diary* believe that he really was in luck when he was rejected by the Widow Winthrop on that fateful November day when his eye noted—in spite of his infatuation—that “her dress was not so clean as sometime it had been. Jehovah Jireh!”

One pictures Cotton Mather as looking instinctively backward to the Heroic Age of New England with pious nervous exaltation, and Samuel Sewall as doing the day's work uprightly without taking anxious thought of either past or future. But Jonathan Edwards is set apart from these and other men. He is a lonely seeker after spiritual perfection, in quest of that city “far on the world's rim,” as Masfield says of it, the city whose builder and maker is God.

The story of Edwards's career has the simplicity and dignity of tragedy. Born in a parsonage in the quiet Connecticut valley in 1703—the year of John Wesley's birth—he is writing at the age of ten to disprove the doctrine of the materiality of the soul. At twelve he is studying “the wondrous way of the working of the spider,” with a

precision and enthusiasm which would have made him a great naturalist. At fourteen he begins his notes on *The Mind* and on *Natural Science*. He is graduated from Yale in 1720, studies theology, and at twenty-four becomes the colleague of his famous grandfather, Solomon Stoddard, in the church at Northampton. He marries the beautiful Sarah Pierrepont, whom he describes in his journal in a prose rhapsody which, like his mystical rhapsodies on religion in the same youthful period, glows with a clear unearthly beauty unmatched in any English prose of that century. For twenty-three years he serves the Northampton church, and his sermons win him the rank of the foremost preacher in New England. John Wesley reads at Oxford his account of the great revival of 1735. Whitefield comes to visit him at Northampton. Then, in 1750, the ascetic preacher alienates his church over issues pertaining to discipline and to the administration of the sacrament. He is dismissed. He preaches his "farewell sermon," like Wesley, like Emerson, like Newman, and many another still unborn. He removes to Stockbridge, then a hamlet in the wilderness, preaches to the Indians, and writes treatises on theology and metaphysics, among them the world

famous *Freedom of the Will*. In 1757, upon the death of his son-in-law, President Aaron Burr of Princeton, Edwards is called to the vacant Presidency. He is reluctant to go, for though he is only fifty-four, his health has never been robust, and he has his great book on the *History of Redemption* still to write. But he accepts, finds the small-pox raging in Princeton upon his arrival in January, 1758, is inoculated, and dies of the disease in March — his dreams unfulfilled, his life-work once more thwarted. Close by the tomb of this saint is the tomb of his grandson, Aaron Burr, who killed Hamilton.

The literary reputation of Jonathan Edwards has turned, like the vicissitudes of his life, upon factors that could not be foreseen. His contemporary fame was chiefly as a preacher, and was due to sermons like those upon *God Glorified in Man's Dependence* and *The Reality of Spiritual Life*, rather than to such discourses as the Enfield sermon, *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*, which in our own day is the best known of his deliverances. Legends have grown up around this terrific Enfield sermon. Its fearful power over its immediate hearers cannot be gainsaid, and it will long continue to be quoted as an example of the

length to which a Calvinistic logician of genius was compelled by his own scheme to go. We still see the tall, sweet-faced man, worn by his daily twelve hours of intense mental toil, leaning on one elbow in the pulpit and reading from manuscript, without even raising his gentle voice, those words which smote his congregation into spasms of terror and which seem to us sheer blasphemy.

Yet the *Farewell Sermon* of 1750 gives a more characteristic view of Edwards's mind and heart, and conveys an ineffaceable impression of his nobility of soul. His diction, like Wordsworth's, is usually plain almost to bareness; the formal framework of his discourses is obtruded; and he hunts objections to their last hiding-place with wearisome pertinacity. Yet his logic is incandescent. Steel sometimes burns to the touch like this, in the bitter winters of New England, and one wonders whether Edwards's brain was not of ice, so pitiless does it seem. His treatise denying the freedom of the will has given him a European reputation comparable with that enjoyed by Franklin in science and Jefferson in political propaganda. It was really a polemic demonstrating the sovereignty of God, rather than pure theology or metaphysics. Edwards goes beyond

Augustine and Calvin in asserting the arbitrary will of the Most High and in "denying to the human will any self-determining power." He has been refuted by events and tendencies, such as the growth of historical criticism and the widespread acceptance of the doctrine of evolution, rather than by the might of any single antagonist. So, too, the Dred Scott decision of Chief Justice Taney, holding that the slave was not a citizen, was not so much answered by opponents as it was superseded by the arbitrament of war. But the idealism of this lonely thinker has entered deeply and permanently into the spiritual life of his countrymen, and he will continue to be read by a few of those who still read Plato and Dante.

"My mother grieves," wrote Benjamin Franklin to his father in 1738, "that one of her sons is an Arian, another an Arminian. What an Arminian or an Arian is, I cannot say that I very well know. The truth is I make such distinctions very little my study." To understand Franklin's indifference to such distinctions, we must realize how completely he represents the secularizing tendencies of his age. What a drama of worldly adventure it all was, this roving life of the tallow-chandler's son, who runs away from home, walks the

streets of Philadelphia with the famous loaves of bread under his arm, is diligent in business, slips over to London, where he gives lessons in swimming and in total abstinence, slips back to Philadelphia and becomes its leading citizen, fights the long battle of the American colonies in London, sits in the Continental Congress, sails to Europe to arrange that French Alliance which brought our Revolution to a successful issue, and comes home at last, full of years and honors, to a bland and philosophical exit from the stage!

He broke with every Puritan tradition. The Franklins were relatively late comers to New England. They sprang from a long line of blacksmiths at Ecton in Northamptonshire. The seat of the Washingtons was not far away, and Franklin's latest biographer points out that the pink-coated huntsmen of the Washington gentry may often have stopped at Ecton to have their horses shod at the Franklin smithy. Benjamin's father came out in 1685, more than fifty years after the most notable Puritan emigration. Young Benjamin, born in 1706, was as untouched by the ardors of that elder generation as he would have been by the visions of Dante—an author, by the way, whom he never mentions, even as he never

mentions Shakespeare. He had no reverence for Puritan New England. To its moral beauty, its fine severity, he was wholly blind. As a boy he thriftily sold his *Pilgrim's Progress*. He became, in the new fashion of that day, a Deist. Like a true child of the eighteenth century, his attitude toward the seventeenth was that of amused or contemptuous superiority. Thackeray has somewhere a charming phrase about his own love for the back seat of the stage-coach, the seat which, in the old coaching days, gave one a view of the receding landscape. Thackeray, like Burke before him, loved historical associations, historical sentiment, the backward look over the long road which humanity has traveled. But Franklin faced the other way. He would have endorsed his friend Jefferson's scornful sentence, "The dead have no rights." He joined himself wholly to that eighteenth century in which his own lot was cast, and, alike in his qualities and in his defects, he became one of its most perfect representatives.

To catch the full spirit of that age, turn for an instant to the London of 1724—the year of Franklin's arrival. Thirty-six years have elapsed since the glorious Revolution of 1688; the Whig principles, then triumphant, have been tacitly

accepted by both political parties; the Jacobite revolt of 1715 has proved a fiasco; the country has accepted the House of Hanover and a government by party leadership of the House of Commons, and it does not care whether Sir Robert Walpole buys a few rotten boroughs, so long as he maintains peace with Europe and prosperity at home. England is weary of seventeenth century "enthusiasm," weary of conflict, sick of idealism. She has found in the accepted Whig principles a satisfactory compromise, a working theory of society, a *modus vivendi* which nobody supposes is perfect but which will answer the prayer appointed to be read in all the churches, "Grant us peace in our time, O Lord." The theories to which men gave their lives in the seventeenth century seem ghostly in their unreality; but the prize turnips on Sir Robert's Norfolk farm, and the wines in his cellar, and the offices at his disposal — these are very real indeed. London merchants are making money; the squire and the parson are tranquilly ruling the country parishes; the philosophy of John Locke is everywhere triumphant. Mr. Pope is the poet of the hour, and his *Essay on Man*, counseling acceptance of our mortal situation, is considered to be the last word of human wisdom and of poetical elegance. In

prose, the style of the *Spectator* rules — an admirable style, Franklin thought, and he imitated it patiently until its ease and urbanity had become his own. And indeed, how much of that London of the third decade of the century passed into the mind of the inquisitive, roving, loose-living printer's apprentice from Philadelphia! It taught him that the tangible world is the real world, and that nothing succeeds like success; but it never even whispered to him that sometimes nothing damns like success.

In his limitations, no less than in his power of assimilation, Franklin was the representative man of his era. He had no artistic interests, no liking for metaphysics after his brief devotion, in early manhood, to the dialogues of Plato. He taught himself some Latin, but he came to believe that the classics had little significance and that they should be superseded by the modern languages. For the mediæval world he had no patience or understanding. To these defects of his century we must add some failings of his own. He was not always truthful. He had an indelible streak of coarseness. His conception of the "art of virtue" was mechanical. When Carlyle called Franklin the "father of all the Yankees," we must

remember that the Scotch prophet hated Yankees and believed that Franklin's smooth, plausible, trader type of morality was only a broad way to the everlasting bonfire.

But it is folly to linger over the limitations of the tallow-chandler's son. The catalogue of his beneficent activity is a vast one. Balzac once characterized him as the man who invented the lightning-rod, the hoax, and the republic. His contributions to science have to do with electricity, earthquakes, geology, meteorology, physics, chemistry, astronomy, mathematics, navigation of air and water, agriculture, medicine, and hygiene. In some of these fields he did pioneer work of lasting significance. His teachings of thrift and prudence, as formulated in the maxims of Poor Richard, gave him a world-wide reputation. He attacked war, like Voltaire, not so much for its wickedness as for its folly, and cheerfully gave up many years of a long life to the effort to promote a better understanding among the nations of the world.

It is perhaps needless to add what all persons who love good writing know, that Benjamin Franklin was a most delightful writer. His letters cover an amusing and extraordinary variety of

topics. He ranges from balloons to summer hats, and from the advantages of deep ploughing to bifocal glasses, which, by the way, he invented. He argues for sharp razors and cold baths, and for fresh air in the sleeping-room. He discusses the morals of the game of chess, the art of swimming, the evils of smoky chimneys, the need of reformed spelling. Indeed, his passion for improvement led him not only to try his hand upon an abridgment of the Book of Common Prayer, but to go even so far as to propose seriously a new rendering of the Lord's Prayer. His famous proposal for a new version of the Bible, however, which Matthew Arnold solemnly held up to reprobation, was only a joke which Matthew Arnold did not see—the new version of Job being, in fact, a clever bit of political satire against party leadership in England. Even more brilliant examples of his skill in political satire are his imaginary *Edict of the King of Prussia against England*, and his famous *Rules for Reducing a Great Empire to a Small One*. But I must not try to call the roll of all the good things in Franklin's ten volumes. I will simply say that those who know Franklin only in his *Autobiography*, charming as that classic production is, have made but an imperfect acquaintance with

the range, the vitality, the vigor of this admirable craftsman who chose a style "smooth, clear, and short," and made it serve every purpose of his versatile and beneficent mind.

When the passage of the Stamp Act in 1765 startled the American colonies out of their provincial sense of security and made them aware of their real attitude toward the mother country, Franklin was in London. Eleven years earlier, in 1754, he had offered a plan for the *Union of the Colonies*, but this had not contemplated separation from England. It was rather what we should call a scheme for imperial federation under the British Crown. We may use his word union, however, in a different field from that of politics. How much union of sentiment, of mental and moral life, of literary, educational, and scientific endeavor, was there in the colonies when the hour of self-examination came? Only the briefest summary may be attempted here.

As to race, these men of the third and fourth generation since the planting of the colonies were by no means so purely English as the first settlers. The 1,600,000 colonists in 1760 were mingled of many stocks, the largest non-English elements being German and Scotch-Irish — that is, Scotch

who had settled for a while in Ulster before emigrating to America. "About one-third of the colonists in 1760," says Professor Channing, "were born outside of America." Crèvecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer* thus defined the Americans: "They are a mixture of English, Scotch, Irish, French, Dutch, Germans, and Swedes. From this promiscuous breed that race now called Americans has arisen." The Atlantic seaboard, with a narrow strip inland, was fairly well covered by local communities, differing in blood, in religion, in political organization—"a congeries of separate experiments" or young utopias, waiting for that most utopian experiment of all, a federal union. But the dominant language of the "promiscuous breed" was English, and in the few real centers of intellectual life the English tradition was almost absolute.

The merest glance at colonial journalism will confirm this estimate. The *Boston News-Letter*, begun in 1704, was the first of the journals, if we omit the single issue of *Publick Occurrences* in the same town in 1690. By 1765 there were nearly fifty colonial newspapers and several magazines. Their influence made for union, in Franklin's sense of that word, and their literary models,

like their paper, type, and even ink, were found in London. The *New England Courant*, established in Boston in 1721 by James Franklin, is full of imitations of the *Tatler*, *Spectator*, and *Guardian*. What is more, the *Courant* boasted of its office collection of books, including Shakespeare, Milton, the *Spectator*, and Swift's *Tale of a Tub*.¹ This was in 1722. If we remember that no allusion to Shakespeare has been discovered in the colonial literature of the seventeenth century, and scarcely an allusion to the Puritan poet Milton, and that the Harvard College Library in 1723 had nothing of Addison, Steele, Bolingbroke, Dryden, Pope, and Swift, and had only recently obtained copies of Milton and Shakespeare, we can appreciate the value of James Franklin's apprenticeship in London. Perhaps we can even forgive him for that attack upon the Mathers which threw the conduct of the *Courant*, for a brief period, into the hands of his brother Benjamin, whose turn at a London apprenticeship was soon to come.

If we follow this younger brother to Philadelphia and to Bradford's *American Mercury* or

¹ Cook, E. C. *Literary Influences in Colonial Newspapers, 1704-1750*. N. Y., 1912.

to Franklin's own *Pennsylvania Gazette*, or if we study the *Gazettes* of Maryland, Virginia, and South Carolina, the impression is still the same. The literary news is still chiefly from London, from two months to a year late. London books are imported and reprinted. Franklin reprints *Pamela*, and his Library Company of Philadelphia has two copies of *Paradise Lost* for circulation in 1741, whereas there had been no copy of that work in the great library of Cotton Mather. American journalism then, as now, owed its vitality to a secular spirit of curiosity about the actual world. It followed England as its model, but it was beginning to develop a temper of its own.

Colonial education and colonial science were likewise chiefly indebted to London, but by 1751 Franklin's papers on electricity began to repay the loan. A university club in New York in 1745 could have had but fifteen members at most, for these were all the "academics" in town. Yet Harvard had then been sending forth her graduates for more than a century. William and Mary was founded in 1693, Yale in 1701, Princeton in 1746, King's (now Columbia) in 1754, the University of Pennsylvania in 1755, and Brown in 1764. These colonial colleges were mainly

in the hands of clergymen. They tended to reproduce a type of scholarship based upon the ancient languages. The curriculum varied but little in the different colonies, and this fact helped to produce a feeling of fellowship among all members of the republic of letters. The men who debated the Stamp Act were, with a few striking exceptions, men trained in Latin and Greek, familiar with the great outlines of human history, accustomed to the discipline of academic disputation. They knew the ideas and the vocabulary of cultivated Europe and were conscious of no provincial inferiority. In the study of the physical sciences, likewise, the colonials were but little behind the mother country. The Royal Society had its distinguished members here. The Mathers, the Dudleys, John Winthrop of Connecticut, John Bartram, James Logan, James Godfrey, Cadwallader Colden, and above all, Franklin himself, were winning the respect of European students, and were teaching Americans to use their eyes and their minds not merely upon the records of the past but in searching out the inexhaustible meanings of the present. There is no more fascinating story than that of the beginnings of American science in and outside of the colleges,

and this movement, like the influence of journalism and of the higher education, counted for colonial union.

Professor Tyler, our foremost literary student of the period, summarizes the characteristics of colonial literature in these words: "Before the year 1765, we find in this country, not one American people, but many American peoples. . . . No cohesive principle prevailed, no centralizing life; each little nation was working out its own destiny in its own fashion." But he adds that with that year the colonial isolation came to an end, and that the student must thereafter "deal with the literature of one multitudinous people, variegated, indeed, in personal traits, but single in its commanding ideas and in its national destinies." It is easy to be wise after the event. Yet there was living in London in 1765, as the agent for Pennsylvania, a shrewd and bland Colonial—an honorary M.A. from both Harvard and Yale, a D.C.L. of Oxford and an LL.D. of St. Andrews—who was by no means sure that the Stamp Act meant the end of Colonialism. And Franklin's uncertainty was shared by Washington. When the tall Virginian took command of the Continental Army as late as 1775, he "abhorred the idea

of independence.” Nevertheless John Jay, writing the second number of the *Federalist* in 1787, only twelve years later, could say: “Providence has been pleased to give this one connected country to one united people; a people descended from the same ancestors, speaking the same language, professing the same religion, attached to the same principles of government.”

CHAPTER IV

THE REVOLUTION

IF we turn, however, to the literature produced in America between the passage of the Stamp Act in 1765 and the adoption of the Constitution in 1787, we perceive that it is a literature of discord and passion. Its spirit is not that of "one united people." Washington could indeed declare in his *Farewell Address* of 1796, "With slight shades of difference, you have the same religion, manners, habits, and political principles"; yet no one knew better than Washington upon what a slender thread this political unity had often hung, and how impossible it had been to foresee the end from the beginning.

It is idle to look in the writings of the Revolutionary period for the literature of beauty, for a quiet harmonious unfolding of the deeper secrets of life. It was a time of swift and pitiless change, of action rather than reflection, of the turning

of many separate currents into one headlong stream. "We must, indeed, all hang together," runs Franklin's well-known witticism in Independence Hall, "or, most assuredly, we shall all hang separately." Excellently spoken, Doctor! And that homely, cheery, daring sentence gives the keynote of much of the Revolutionary writing that has survived. It may be heard in the state papers of Samuel Adams, the oratory of Patrick Henry, the pamphlets of Thomas Paine, the satires of Freneau and Trumbull, and in the subtle, insinuating, thrilling paragraphs of Thomas Jefferson.

We can only glance in passing at the literature of the Lost Cause, the Loyalist or "Tory" pleadings for allegiance to Britain. It was written by able and honest men, like Boucher and Odell, Seabury, Leonard and Galloway. They distrusted what Seabury called "our sovereign Lord the Mob." They represented, in John Adams's opinion, nearly one-third of the people of the colonies, and recent students believe that this estimate was too low. In some colonies the Loyalists were clearly in the majority. In all they were a menacing element, made up of the conservative, the prosperous, the well-educated, with a mixture, of course, of mere placemen and tuft-hunters. They

composed weighty pamphlets, eloquent sermons, and sparkling satire in praise of the old order of things. When their cause was lost forever, they wrote gossipy letters from their exile in London or pathetic verses in their new home in Nova Scotia and Ontario. Their place in our national life and literature has never been filled, and their talents and virtues are never likely to receive adequate recognition. They took the wrong fork of the road.

There were gentle spirits, too, in this period, endowed with delicate literary gifts, but quite unsuited for the clash of controversy — members, in Crèvecoeur's touching words, of the "secret communion among good men throughout the world." "I am a lover of peace, what must I do?" asks Crèvecoeur in his *Letters from an American Farmer*. "I was happy before this unfortunate Revolution. I feel that I am no longer so, therefore I regret the change. My heart sometimes seems tired with beating, it wants rest like my eyelids, which feel oppressed with so many watchings." Crèvecoeur, an immigrant from Normandy, was certainly no weakling, but he felt that the great idyllic American adventure — which he described so captivately in his chapter entitled *What is an American* — was

ending tragically in civil war. Another white-souled itinerant of that day was John Woolman of New Jersey, whose *Journal*, praised by Charles Lamb and Channing and edited by Whittier, is finding more readers in the twentieth century than it won in the nineteenth. "A man unlettered," said Whittier, "but with natural refinement and delicate sense of fitness, the purity of whose heart enters into his language." Woolman died at fifty-two in far-away York, England, whither he had gone to attend a meeting of the Society of Friends.

The three tall volumes of the Princeton edition of the poems of Philip Freneau bear the sub-title, "Poet of the American Revolution." But our Revolution, in truth, never had an adequate poet. The prose-men, such as Jefferson, rose nearer the height of the great argument than did the men of rhyme. Here and there the struggle inspired a brisk ballad like Francis Hopkinson's *Battle of the Kegs*, a Hudibrastic satire like Trumbull's *McFingal*, or a patriotic song like Timothy Dwight's *Columbia*. Freneau painted from his own experience the horrors of the British prison-ship, and celebrated, in cadences learned from Gray and Collins, the valor of the men who fell at Eutaw

Springs. There was patriotic verse in extraordinary profusion, but its literary value is slight, and it reveals few moods of the American mind that are not more perfectly conveyed through oratory, the pamphlet, and the political essay. The immediate models of this Revolutionary verse were the minor British bards of the eighteenth century, a century greatly given to verse-writing, but endowed by Heaven with the "prose-reason" mainly. The reader of Burton E. Stevenson's collection of *Poems of American History* can easily compare the contemporary verse inspired by the events of the Revolution with the modern verse upon the same historic themes. He will see how slenderly equipped for song were most of the later eighteenth-century Americans and how unfavorable to poetry was the tone of that hour.

Freneau himself suffered, throughout his long career, from the depressing indifference of his public to the true spirit of poetry. "An old college mate of mine," said James Madison — who was by tradition Freneau's room-mate at Princeton in the class of 1771 — "a poet and man of literary and refined tastes, knowing nothing of the world." When but three years out of college, the cautious Madison wrote to another friend:

"Poetry wit and Criticism Romances Plays &c captivated me much: but I begin to discover that they deserve but a moderate portion of a mortal's Time and that something more substantial more durable more profitable befits our riper age." Madison was then at the ripe age of twenty-three! Professor Pattee, Freneau's editor, quotes these words to illustrate the "common sense" atmosphere of the age which proved fatal to Freneau's development. Yet the sturdy young New Yorker, of Huguenot descent, is a charming figure, and his later malevolence was shown only to his political foes. After leaving Princeton he tries teaching, the law, the newspaper, the sea; he is aflame with patriotic zeal; he writes, like most American poets, far too much for his own reputation. As the editor of the *National Gazette* in Philadelphia, he becomes involved in the bitter quarrel between his chief, Jefferson, and Alexander Hamilton. His attachment to the cause of the French Revolution makes him publish baseless attacks upon Washington. By and by he retires to a New Jersey farm, still toying with journalism, still composing verses. He turns patriotic poet once more in the War of 1812; but the public has now forgotten him.

He lives on in poverty and seclusion, and in his eightieth year loses his way in a snowstorm and perishes miserably — this in 1832, the year of the death of the great Sir Walter Scott, who once had complimented Freneau by borrowing one of his best lines of poetry.

It is in the orations and pamphlets and state-papers inspired by the Revolutionary agitation that we find the most satisfactory expression of the thought and feeling of that generation. Its typical literature is civic rather than æsthetic, a sort of writing which has been incidental to the accomplishing of some political, social, or moral purpose, and which scarcely regards itself as literature at all. James Otis's argument against the Writs of Assistance in Massachusetts in 1761, and Patrick Henry's speech in the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1765, mark epochs in the emotional life of these communities. They were reported imperfectly or not at all, but they can no more be ignored in an assessment of our national experience than editorials, sermons, or conversations which have expressed the deepest feelings of a day and then have perished beyond resurrection.

Yet if natural orators like Otis and Henry be denied a strictly "literary" rating because their

surviving words are obviously inadequate to account for the popular effect of their speeches, it is still possible to measure the efficiency of the pamphleteer. When John Adams tells us that "James Otis was Isaiah and Ezekiel united," we must take his word for the impression which Otis's oratory left upon his mind. But John Adams's own writings fill ten stout volumes which invite our judgment. The "truculent and sarcastic splendor" of his hyperboles need not blind us to his real literary excellencies, such as clearness, candor, vigor of phrase, freshness of idea. A testy, rugged, "difficult" person was John Adams, but he grew mellow with age, and his latest letters and journals are full of whimsical charm.

John Adams's cousin Samuel was not precisely a charming person. Bigoted, tireless, secretive, this cunning manipulator of political passions followed many tortuous paths. His ability for adroit misstatement of an adversary's position has been equaled but once in our history. But to the casual reader of his four volumes, Samuel Adams seems ever to be breathing the liberal air of the town-meeting: everything is as plainly obvious as a good citizen can make it. He has, too, the large utterance of the European liberalism of his day.

"Resolved," read his Resolutions of the House of Representatives of Massachusetts in 1765, "that there are certain essential rights of the British constitution of government which are founded in the law of God and nature and are the common rights of mankind." In his statement of the Rights of the Colonists (1772) we are assured that "among the natural rights of the colonists are these, First, a right to Life; secondly to Liberty; thirdly to Property. . . . All men have a Right to remain in a State of Nature as long as they please. . . . When Men enter into Society, it is by voluntary consent." Jean-Jacques himself could not be more bland, nor at heart more fiercely demagogic.

"Tom" Paine would have been no match for "Sam" Adams in a town-meeting, but he was an even greater pamphleteer. He had arrived from England in 1774, at the age of thirty-eight, having hitherto failed in most of his endeavors for a livelihood. "Rebellious Staymaker; unkempt," says Carlyle; but General Charles Lee noted that there was "genius in his eyes," and he bore a letter of introduction from Franklin commending him as an "ingenious, worthy young man," which obtained for him a position on the *Pennsylvania Magazine*. Before he had been a year on American soil, Paine

was writing the most famous pamphlet of our political literature, *Common Sense*, which appeared in January, 1776. "A style hitherto unknown on this side of the Atlantic," wrote Edmund Randolph. Yet this style of familiar talk to the crowd had been used seventy years earlier by Defoe and Swift, and it was to be employed again by a gaunt American frontiersman who was born in 1809, the year of Thomas Paine's death. *The Crisis*, a series of thirteen pamphlets, of which the first was issued in December, 1776, seemed to justify the contemporary opinion that the "American cause owed as much to the pen of Paine as to the sword of Washington." Paine, who was now serving in the army, might have heard his own words, "These are the times that try men's souls," read aloud, by Washington's orders, to the ragged troops just before they crossed the Delaware to win the victory of Trenton. The best known productions of Paine's subsequent career, *The Rights of Man* and *The Age of Reason*, were written in Europe, but they were read throughout America. The reputation of the "rebellious Staymaker" has suffered from certain grimy habits and from the ridiculous charge of atheism. He was no more an atheist than Franklin or Jefferson. In no sense an original

thinker, he could impart to outworn shreds of deistic controversy and to shallow generalizations about democracy a personal fervor which transformed them and made his pages gay and bold and clear as a trumpet.

Clear and bold and gay was Alexander Hamilton likewise; and his literary services to the Revolution are less likely to be underestimated than Thomas Paine's. They began with that boyish speech in "the Fields" of New York City in 1774 and with *The Farmer Refuted*, a reply to Samuel Seabury's *Westchester Farmer*. They were continued in extraordinary letters, written during Hamilton's military career, upon the defects of the Articles of Confederation and of the finances of the Confederation. Hamilton contributed but little to the actual structure of the new Constitution, but as a debater he fought magnificently and triumphantly for its adoption by the Convention of the State of New York in 1788. Together with Jay and Madison he defended the fundamental principles of the Federal Union in the remarkable series of papers known as the *Federalist*. These eighty-five papers, appearing over the signature "Publius" in two New York newspapers between October, 1787, and April, 1788, owed their con-

ception largely to Hamilton, who wrote more than half of them himself. In manner they are not unlike the substantial Whig literature of England, and in political theory they have little in common with the Revolutionary literature which we have been considering. The reasoning is close, the style vigorous but neither warmed by passion nor colored by the individual emotions of the author. The *Federalist* remains a classic example of the civic quality of our post-Revolutionary American political writing, broadly social in its outlook, well informed as to the past, confident—but not reckless—of the future. Many Americans still read it who would be shocked by Tom Paine and bored with Edmund Burke. It has none of the literary genius of either of those writers, but its formative influence upon successive generations of political thinking has been steady and sound.

In fact, our citizen literature cannot be understood aright if one fails to observe that its effect has often turned, not upon mere verbal skill, but upon the weight of character behind the words. Thus the grave and reserved George Washington says of the Constitution of 1787: "Let us raise a standard to which the wise and the honest can

repair; the event is in the hand of God.” The whole personality of the great Virginian is back of that simple, perfect sentence. It brings us to our feet, like a national anthem.

One American, no doubt our most gifted man of letters of that century, passed most of the Revolutionary period abroad, in the service of his country. Benjamin Franklin was fifty-nine in the year of the Stamp Act. When he returned from France in 1785 he was seventy-nine, but he was still writing as admirably as ever when he died at eighty-four. We cannot dismiss this singular, varied, and fascinating American better than by quoting the letter which George Washington wrote to him in September, 1789. It has the dignity and formality of the eighteenth century, but it is warm with tested friendship and it glows with deep human feeling: “If to be venerated for benevolence, if to be admired for talents, if to be esteemed for patriotism, if to be beloved for philanthropy, can gratify the human mind, you must have the pleasing consolation to know that you have not lived in vain. And I flatter myself that it will not be ranked among the least grateful occurrences of your life to be assured, that, so long as I retain my memory, you will be recollected with respect, veneration,

and affection by your sincere friend, George Washington.”

There remains another Virginian, the symbol of the Revolutionary age, the author of words more widely known around the globe than any other words penned by an American. “Thomas Jefferson,” writes the latest of his successors in the Presidency, “was not a man of the people, but he was a man of such singular insight that he saw that all the roots of generous power come from the people.” On his father’s side Jefferson came from sound yeoman stock, in which Welsh blood ran. His mother was a Virginia Randolph. Born in Albemarle County, near the “little mountain”—Monticello—where he built a mansion for his bride and where he lies buried, the tall, strong, red-haired, gray-eyed, gifted boy was reputed the best shot, the best rider, the best fiddle-player in the county. He studied hard at William and Mary over his Greek, Latin, French, Italian, and Spanish, but he also frequented the best society of the little capital. He learned to call himself a Deist and to theorize about ideal commonwealths. There was already in him that latent radicalism which made him strike down, as soon as he had the power, two of the fundamental principles of the society into which he

was born, the principle of entailed property and that of church establishment.

Such was the youth of twenty-two who was thrilled in 1765 by the Stamp Act. In the ten years of passionate discussion which followed, two things became clear: first, that there had long existed among the colonists very radical theoretical notions of political freedom; and second, that there was everywhere a spirit of practical conservatism. Jefferson illustrates the union of these two tendencies.

He took his seat in the Continental Congress in June, 1775. He was only thirty-two, but he had already written, in the summer of 1774, *A Summary View of the Rights of British America* which had been published in England by Burke, himself a judge of good writing and sound politics. Jefferson had also prepared in 1775 the *Address of the Virginia House of Burgesses*. For these reasons he was placed at the head of the Committee for drafting the Declaration of Independence. We need not linger over the familiar circumstances of its composition. Everybody knows how Franklin and Adams made a few verbal alterations in the first draft, how the committee of five then reported it to the Congress, which proceeded to cut out

about one-fourth of the matter, while Franklin tried to comfort the writhing author with his cheerful story about the sign of John Thompson the hatter. Forty-seven years afterwards, in reply to the charge of lack of originality brought against the Declaration by Timothy Pickering and John Adams—charges which have been repeated at intervals ever since—Jefferson replied philosophically: “Whether I gathered my ideas from reading or reflection I do not know. I know only that I turned neither to book nor pamphlet while writing it. I did not consider it as any part of my charge to invent new ideas altogether and to offer no sentiment which had ever been expressed before.”

O wise young man, and fundamentally Anglo-Saxon young man, to turn his back, in that crisis, to the devil of mere cleverness, and stick to recognized facts and accepted sentiments! But his pen retains its cunning in spite of him; and the drop of hot Welsh blood tells; and the cosmopolitan reading and thinking tell; and they transform what Pickering called a “commonplace compilation, its sentiments hackneyed in Congress for two years before,” into an immortal manifesto to mankind.

Its method is the simplest. The preamble is

philosophical, dealing with "self-evident" truths. Today the men who dislike or doubt these truths dismiss the preamble as "theoretical," or, to use another term of derogation favored by reactionaries, "French." But if the preamble be French and philosophical, the specific charges against the King are very English and practical. Here are certain facts, presented no doubt with consummate rhetorical skill, but facts, undeniably. The Anglo-Saxon in Jefferson is basal, racial; the turn for academic philosophizing after the French fashion is personal, acquired; but the range and sweep and enduring vitality of this matchless state paper lie in its illumination of stubborn facts by general principles, its decent respect to the opinions of mankind, its stately and noble utterance of national sentiments and national reasons to a "candid world."

It has long been the fashion, among a certain school of half-hearted Americans — and unless I am mistaken, the teaching has increased during the last decades — to minimize the value of Jefferson's "self-evident truths." Rufus Choate, himself a consummate rhetorician, sneered at those "glittering generalities," and countless college-bred men, some of them occupying the highest

positions, have echoed the sneer. The essence of the objection to Jefferson's platform lies of course in his phrase, "all men are created equal," with the subsidiary phrase about governments "deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." Editors and congressmen and even college professors have proclaimed themselves unable to assent to these phrases of the Declaration, and unable even to understand them. These objectors belong partly, I think, in Jefferson's category of "nervous persons"—"anti-republicans," as he goes on to define them—"whose languid fibres have more analogy with a passive than an active state of things." Other objectors to the phrase "all men are created equal" have had an obvious personal or political motive for refusing assent to the proposition. But "no intelligent man," says one of Jefferson's biographers, "has ever misconstrued it [the Declaration] except intentionally."

Nobody would claim today that Thomas Jefferson's statement of the sentiments and reasons for the independence of the thirteen British colonies in 1776 was an adequate handbook of political wisdom, fit for all the exigencies of contemporary American democracy. It is not that. It is

simply, in Lincoln's phrase, one of "the standard maxims of free society" which no democracy can safely disregard.

Jefferson's long life, so varied, so flexible, so responsive to the touch of popular forces, illustrates the process by which the Virginia mind of 1743 became the nationalized, unionized mind of 1826. It is needless here to dwell upon the traits of his personal character: his sweetness of spirit, his stout-heartedness in disaster, his scorn of money, his love for the intellectual life. "I have no ambition to govern men," he wrote to Edward Rutledge. He was far happier talking about Greek and Anglo-Saxon with Daniel Webster before the fire-place of Monticello than he ever was in the presidential chair. His correspondence was enormous. His writings fill twenty volumes. In his theories of education he was fifty years ahead of his time; in his absolute trust in humanity he was generations ahead of it. "I am not one of those who fear the people," he declared proudly. It is because of this touching faith, this invincible and matchless ardor, that Jefferson is today remembered. He foreshadowed Lincoln. His belief in the inarticulate common people is rewarded by their obstinate fidelity to his name as a type and

symbol. "I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of society but the people themselves," wrote Jefferson, and with the people themselves is the depository of his fame.

CHAPTER V

THE KNICKERBOCKER GROUP

THE Fourth of July orator for 1826 in Cambridge, Massachusetts, was Edward Everett. Although only thirty-two he was already a distinguished speaker. In the course of his oration he apostrophized John Adams and Thomas Jefferson as venerable survivors of that momentous day, fifty years earlier, which had witnessed our Declaration of Independence. But even as Everett was speaking, the aged author of the Declaration breathed his last at Monticello, and in the afternoon of that same day Adams died also, murmuring, it is said, with his latest breath, and as if with the whimsical obstinacy of an old man who hated to be beaten by his ancient rival, "Thomas Jefferson still lives." But Jefferson was already gone.

On the first of August, Everett commemorated the career of the two Revolutionary leaders, and on the following day a greater than Everett, Daniel

Webster, pronounced the famous eulogy in Faneuil Hall. Never were the thoughts and emotions of a whole country more adequately voiced than in this commemorative oratory. Its pulse was high with national pride over the accomplishments of half a century. "I ask," Everett declared, "whether more has not been done to extend the domain of civilization, in fifty years, since the Declaration of Independence, than would have been done in five centuries of continued colonial subjection?" Webster asserted in his peroration: "It cannot be denied, but by those who would dispute against the sun, that with America, and in America, a new era commences in human affairs. This era is distinguished by free representative governments, by entire religious liberty, by improved systems of national intercourse, by a newly awakened and an unconquerable spirit of free enquiry, and by a diffusion of knowledge through the community such as has been before altogether unknown and unheard of."

Was this merely the "tall talk" then so characteristic of American oratory and soon to be satirized in *Martin Chuzzlewit*? Or was it prompted by a deep and true instinct for the significance of the vast changes that had come over American life

since 1776? The external changes were familiar enough to Webster's auditors: the opening of seemingly illimitable territory through the Louisiana Purchase, the development of roads, canals, and manufactures; a rapid increase in wealth and population; a shifting of political power due to the rise of the new West—in a word, the evidences of irrepressible national energy. But this energy was inadequately expressed by the national literature. The more cultivated Americans were quite aware of this deficiency. It was confessed by the pessimistic Fisher Ames and by the ardent young men who in 1815 founded *The North American Review*. British critics in *The Edinburgh* and *The Quarterly*, commenting upon recent works of travel in America, pointed out the literary poverty of the American soil. Sydney Smith, by no means the most offensive of these critics, declared in 1820: "During the thirty or forty years of their independence they have done absolutely nothing for the sciences, for the arts, for literature. . . . In the four quarters of the globe, who reads an American book? or goes to an American play? or looks at an American picture or statue?"

Sydney Smith's question "Who reads an American book?" has outlived all of his own clever

volumes. Even while he was asking it, London was eagerly reading Irving's *Sketch Book*. In 1821 came Fenimore Cooper's *Spy* and Bryant's *Poems*, and by 1826, when Webster was announcing in his rolling orotund that Adams and Jefferson were no more, the London and Paris booksellers were covering their stalls with Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*. Irving, Cooper, and Bryant are thus the pioneers in a new phase of American literary activity, often called, for convenience in labeling, the Knickerbocker Group because of the identification of these men with New York. And close behind these leaders come a younger company, destined likewise, in the shy boyish words of Hawthorne, one of the number, "to write books that would be read in England." For by 1826 Hawthorne and Longfellow were out of college and were trying to learn to write. Ticknor, Prescott, and Bancroft, somewhat older men, were settling to their great tasks. Emerson was entering upon his duties as a minister. Edgar Allan Poe, at that University of Virginia which Jefferson had just founded, was doubtless revising *Tamerlane and Other Poems* which he was to publish in Boston in the following year. Holmes was a Harvard undergraduate. Garrison had just printed

Whittier's first published poem in the Newburyport *Free Press*. Walt Whitman was a barefooted boy on Long Island, and Lowell, likewise seven years of age, was watching the birds in the tree-tops of Elmwood. But it was Washington Irving who showed all of these men that nineteenth century England would be interested in American books.

The very word Knickerbocker is one evidence of the vitality of Irving's happy imaginings. In 1809 he had invented a mythical Dutch historian of New York named Diedrich Knickerbocker and fathered upon him a witty parody of Dr. Mitchill's grave *Picture of New York*. To read Irving's chapters today is to witness one of the rarest and most agreeable of phenomena, namely, the actual beginning of a legend which the world is unwilling to let die. The book made Sir Walter Scott's sides ache with laughter, and reminded him of the humor of Swift and Sterne. But certain New Yorkers were slow to see the joke.

Irving was himself a New Yorker, born just at the close of the Revolution, of a Scotch father and English mother. His youth was pleasantly idle, with a little random education, much theater-going, and plentiful rambles with a gun along the

Hudson River. In 1804 he went abroad for his health, returned and helped to write the light social satire of the *Salmagundi Papers*, and became, after the publication of the *Knickerbocker History*, a local celebrity. Sailing for England in 1815 on business, he stayed until 1832 as a roving man of letters in England and Spain and then as Secretary of the American Legation in London. *The Sketch Book*, *Bracebridge Hall*, and *Tales of a Traveler* are the best known productions of Irving's fruitful residence in England. *The Life of Columbus*, the *Conquest of Granada*, and *The Alhambra* represent his first sojourn in Spain. After his return to America he became fascinated with the Great West, made the travels described in his *Tour of the Prairies*, and told the story of roving trappers and the fur trade in *Captain Bonneville* and *Astoria*. For four years he returned to Spain as American Minister. In his last tranquil years at Sunnyside on the Hudson, where he died in 1859, he wrote graceful lives of Goldsmith and of Washington.

Such a glance at the shelf containing Irving's books suggests but little of that personal quality to which he owes his significance as an interpreter of America to the Old World. This son of a narrow, hard, Scotch dealer in cutlery, this drifter

about town when New York was only a big slovenly village, this light-hearted scribbler of satire and sentiment, was a gentleman born. His boyhood and youth were passed in that period of Post-Revolutionary reaction which exhibits the United States in some of its most unlovely aspects. Historians like Henry Adams and McMaster have painted in detail the low estate of education, religion, and art as the new century began. The bitter feeling of the nascent nation toward Great Britain was intensified by the War of 1812. The Napoleonic Wars had threatened to break the last threads of our friendship for France, and suspicion of the Holy Alliance led to an era of national self-assertion of which the Monroe Doctrine was only one expression. The raw Jacksonism of the West seemed to be gaining upon the older civilizations represented by Virginia and Massachusetts. The self-made type of man began to pose as the genuine American. And at this moment came forward a man of natural lucidity and serenity of mind, of perfect poise and good temper, who knew both Europe and America and felt that they ought to know one another better and to like one another more. That was Irving's service as an international mediator. He diffused sweetness and

light in an era marked by bitterness and obscurity. It was a triumph of character as well as of literary skill.

But the skill was very noticeable also. Irving's prose is not that of the Defoe-Swift-Franklin-Paine type of plain talk to the crowd. It is rather an inheritance from that other eighteenth century tradition, the conversation of the select circle. Its accents were heard in Steele and Addison and were continued in Goldsmith, Sterne, Cowper, and Charles Lamb. Among Irving's successors, George William Curtis and Charles Dudley Warner and William Dean Howells have been masters of it likewise. It is mellow human talk, delicate, regardful, capable of exquisite modulation. With instinctive artistic taste, Irving used this old and sound style upon fresh American material. In *Rip van Winkle* and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* he portrayed his native valley of the Hudson, and for a hundred years connoisseurs of style have perceived the exquisite fitness of the language to the images and ideas which Irving desired to convey. To render the Far West of that epoch this style is perhaps not "big" and broad enough, but when used as Irving uses it in describing Stratford and Westminster Abbey and an Old English

Christmas, it becomes again a perfect medium. Hawthorne adopted it for *Our Old Home*, and Englishmen recognized it at once as a part of their own inheritance, enriched, like certain wines, by the voyage across the Atlantic and home again. Irving wrote of England, Mr. Warner once said, as Englishmen would have liked to write about it. When he described the Alhambra and Granada and the Moors, it was the style, rich both in physical sensation and in dreamlike reverie, which revealed to the world the quick American appreciation of foreign scenes and characters. Its key is sympathy.

Irving's popularity has endured in England. It suffered during the middle of the century in his own country, for the strongest New England authors taught the public to demand more thought and passion than were in Irving's nature. Possibly the nervous, journalistic style of the twentieth century allows too scanty leisure of mind for the full enjoyment of the Knickerbocker flavor. Yet such changes as these in literary fashion scarcely affect the permanent service of Irving to our literature. He immortalized a local type—the New York Dutchman—and local legends, like that of Rip van Winkle; he used the framework of the

narrative essay to create something almost like the perfected short story of Poe and Hawthorne; he wrote prose with unfailing charm in an age when charm was lacking; and, if he had no message, it should be remembered that some of the most useful ambassadors have had none save to reveal, with delicacy and tact and humorous kindness, the truth that foreign persons have feelings precisely like our own.

Readers of Sir Walter Scott's *Journal* may remember his account of an evening party in Paris in 1826 where he met Fenimore Cooper, then in the height of his European reputation. "So the Scotch and American lions took the field together," wrote Sir Walter, who loved to be generous. *The Last of the Mohicans*, then just published, threatened to eclipse the fame of *Ivanhoe*. Cooper, born in 1789, was eighteen years younger than the Wizard of the North, and was more deeply indebted to him than he knew. For it was Scott who had created the immense nineteenth century audience for prose fiction, and who had evolved a kind of formula for the novel, ready for Cooper's use. Both men were natural story-tellers. Scott had the richer mind and the more fully developed historical imagination. Both were out-of-doors

men, lovers of manly adventure and of natural beauty. But the American had the good fortune to be able to utilize in his books his personal experiences of forest and sea and to reveal to Europe the real romance of the American wilderness.

That Cooper was the first to perceive the artistic possibilities of this romance, no one would claim. Brockden Brown, a Quaker youth of Philadelphia, a disciple of the English Godwin, had tried his hand at the very end of the eighteenth century upon American variations of the Gothic romance then popular in England. Brown had a keen eye for the values of the American landscape and even of the American Indian. He had a knack for passages of ghastly power, as his descriptions of maniacs, murderers, sleep-walkers, and solitaries abundantly prove. But he had read too much and lived too little to rival the masters of the art of fiction. And there was a traveled Frenchman, Chateaubriand, surely an expert in the art of eloquent prose, who had transferred to the pages of his American Indian stories, *Atala* and *René*, the mystery and enchantment of our dark forests and endless rivers. But Chateaubriand, like Brockden Brown, is feverish. A taint

of old-world eroticism and despair hovers like a miasma over his magnificent panorama of the wilderness. Cooper, like Scott, is masculine.

He was a Knickerbocker only by adoption. Born in New Jersey, his childhood was spent in the then remote settlement of Cooperstown in Central New York. He had a little schooling at Albany, and a brief and inglorious career at Yale with the class of 1806. He went to sea for two years, and then served for three years in the United States Navy upon Lakes Ontario and Champlain, the very scene of some of his best stories. In 1811 he married, resigned from the Navy, and settled upon a little estate in Westchester County, near New York. Until the age of thirty, he was not in the least a bookman, but a healthy man of action. Then, as the well-known anecdote goes, he exclaims to his wife, after reading a stupid English novel, "I believe I could write a better story myself." *Precaution* (1820) was the result, but whether it was better than the unknown English book, no one can now say. It was bad enough. Yet the next year Cooper published *The Spy*, one of the finest of his novels, which was instantly welcomed in England and translated in France. Then came, in swift succession, *The Pioneers*, the first Leather-

Stocking tale in order of composition, and *The Pilot*, to show that Scott's *Pirate* was written by a landsman! *Lionel Lincoln* and *The Last of the Mohicans* followed. The next seven years were spent in Europe, mainly in France, where *The Prairie* and *The Red Rover* were written. Cooper now looked back upon his countrymen with eyes of critical detachment, and made ready to tell them some of their faults. He came home to Cooperstown in 1833, the year after Irving's return to America. He had won, deservedly, a great fame, which he proceeded to imperil by his combativeness with his neighbors and his harsh strictures upon the national character, due mainly to his lofty conception of the ideal America. He continued to spin yarns of sea and shore, and to write naval history. The tide of fashion set against him in the eighteen-forties when Bulwer and Dickens rode into favor, but the stout-hearted old pioneer could afford to bide his time. He died in 1851, just as Mrs. Stowe was writing *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

Two generations have passed since then, and Cooper's place in our literature remains secure. To have written our first historical novel, *The Spy*, our first sea-story, *The Pilot*, and to have created

the Leather-Stocking series, is glory enough. In his perception of masculine character, Cooper ranks with Fielding. His sailors, his scouts and spies, his good and bad Indians, are as veritable human figures as Squire Western. Long Tom Coffin, Harvey Birch, Hawk-Eye, and Chingachgook are physically and morally true to life itself. Read the Leather-Stocking books in the order of the events described, beginning with *The Deerslayer*, then *The Last of the Mohicans*, *The Pathfinder*, *The Pioneers*, and ending with the vast darkening horizon of *The Prairie* and the death of the trapper, and one will feel how natural and inevitable are the fates of the personages and the alterations in the life of the frontier. These books vary in their poetic quality and in the degree of their realism, but to watch the evolution of the leading figure is to see human life in its actual texture.

Clever persons and pedantic persons have united to find fault with certain elements of Cooper's art. Mark Twain, in one of his least inspired moments, selected Cooper's novels for attack. Every grammar school teacher is ready to point out that his style is often prolix and his sentences are sometimes ungrammatical. Amateurs even criticize Cooper's seamanship, although it seemed

impeccable to Admiral Mahan. No doubt one must admit the "helplessness, propriety, and incapacity" of most of Cooper's women, and the dreadfulness of his bores, particularly the Scotchmen, the doctors, and the naturalists. Like Sir Walter, Cooper seems to have taken but little pains in the deliberate planning of his plots. Frequently he accepts a ready-made formula of villain and hero, predicament and escape, renewed crisis and rescue, mystification and explanation, worthy of a third-rate novelist. His salvation lies in his genius for action, the beauty and grandeur of his landscapes, the primitive veracity of his children of nature.

Cooper was an elemental man, and he comprehended, by means of something deeper than mere artistic instinct, the feelings of elemental humanity in the presence of the wide ocean or of the deep woods. He is as healthy and sane as Fielding, and he possesses an additional quality which all of the purely English novelists lack. It was the result of his youthful sojourn in the wilderness. Let us call it the survival in him of an aboriginal imagination. Cooper reminds one somehow of a moose—an ungraceful creature perhaps, but indubitably big, as many a hunter has suddenly

realized when he has come unexpectedly upon a moose that whirled to face him in the twilight silence of a northern wood.

Something of this far-off and gigantic primitivism inheres also in the poetry of William Cullen Bryant. His portrait, with the sweeping white beard and the dark folds of the cloak, suggests the Bard as the Druids might have known him. But in the eighteen-thirties and forties, Mr. Bryant's alert, clean-shaven face, and energetic gait as he strode down Broadway to the *Evening Post* office, suggested little more than a vigorous and somewhat radical editor of an increasingly prosperous Democratic newspaper. There was nothing of the Fringed Gentian or Yellow Violet about him. Like so many of the Knickerbockers, Bryant was an immigrant to New York; in fact, none of her adopted men of letters have represented so perfectly the inherited traits of the New England Puritan. To understand his long and honorable public life it is necessary to know something of the city of his choice, but to enter into the spirit of his poetry one must go back to the hills of western Massachusetts.

Bryant had a right to his cold-weather mind. He came from Mayflower stock. His father, Dr

Peter Bryant of Cummington, was a sound country physician, with liberal preferences in theology, Federalist views in politics, and a library of seven hundred volumes, rich in poetry. The poet's mother records his birth in her diary in terse words which have the true Spartan tang: "Nov. 3, 1794. Stormy, wind N. E. Churned. Seven in the evening a son born." Two days later the November wind shifted. "Nov. 5, 1794. Clear, wind N. W. Made Austin a coat. Sat up all day. Went into the kitchen." The baby, it appears, had an abnormally large head and was dipped, day after day, in rude hydropathy, into an icy spring. A precocious childhood was followed by a stern, somewhat unhappy, but aspiring boyhood. The little fellow, lying prone with his brothers before the firelight of the kitchen, reading English poetry from his father's library, used to pray that he too might become a poet. At thirteen he produced a satire on Jefferson, *The Embargo*, which his proud Federalist father printed at Boston in 1808. The youth had nearly one year at Williams College, over the mountain ranges to the west. He wished to continue his education at Yale, but his father had no money for this greater venture, and the son remained at home. There, in the autumn

of 1811, on the bleak hills, he composed the first draft of *Thanatopsis*. He was seventeen, and he had been reading Blair's *Grave* and the poems of the consumptive Henry Kirke White. He hid his verses in a drawer, and five years later his father found them, shed tears over them, and sent them to the *North American Review*, where they were published in September, 1817.

In the meantime the young man had studied law, though with dislike of it, and with the confession that he sometimes read *The Lyrical Ballads* when he might have been reading Blackstone. One December afternoon in 1815, he was walking from Cummington to Plainfield — aged twenty-one, and looking for a place in which to settle as a lawyer. Across the vivid sunset flew a black duck, as solitary and homeless as himself. The bird seemed an image of his own soul, "lone wandering but not lost." Before he slept that night he had composed the poem *To a Waterfowl*. No more authentic inspiration ever visited a poet, and though Bryant wrote verse for more than sixty years after that crimson sky had paled into chill December twilight, his lines never again vibrated with such communicative passion.

Bryant's ensuing career revealed the steady pur-

pose, the stoicism, the reticence of the Puritan. It was highly successful, judged even by material standards. *Thanatopsis* had been instantly regarded in 1817 as the finest poem yet produced in America. The author was invited to contribute to the *North American Review* an essay on American poetry, and this, like all of Bryant's prose work, was admirably written. He delivered his Harvard Phi Beta Kappa poem, *The Ages*, in 1821, the year of Emerson's graduation. After a brief practice of the law in Great Barrington, he entered in 1826 into the unpromising field of journalism in New York. While other young Knickerbockers wasted their literary strength on trifles and dissipated their moral energies, Bryant held steadily to his daily task. His life in town was sternly ascetic, but he allowed himself long walks in the country, and he continued to meditate a somewhat thankless Muse. In 1832 he visited his brothers on the Illinois prairies, and stopped one day to chat with a "tall awkward uncouth lad" of racy conversational powers, who was leading his company of volunteers into the Black Hawk War. The two men were destined to meet again in 1860, when Bryant presided at that Cooper Union address of Lincoln's which revealed to New York and to the country that the

former captain of volunteers was now a king of men. Lincoln was embarrassed on that occasion, it is said, by Bryant's fastidious, dignified presence. Not so Nathaniel Hawthorne, who had seen the poet in Rome, two years before. "There was a weary look in his face," wrote Hawthorne, "as if he were tired of seeing things and doing things. . . . He uttered neither passion nor poetry, but excellent good sense, and accurate information, on whatever subject transpired; a very pleasant man to associate with, but rather cold, I should imagine, if one should seek to touch his heart with one's own." Such was the impression Bryant made upon less gifted men than Hawthorne, as he lived out his long and useful life in the Knickerbocker city. Toward the close of it he was in great demand for public occasions; and it was after delivering a speech dedicating a statue to Mazzini in Central Park in 1878, when Bryant was eighty-four, that a fit of dizziness caused a fall which proved fatal to the venerable poet. It was just seventy years since Dr. Peter Bryant had published his boy's verses on *The Embargo*.

Although Bryant's poetry has never roused any vociferous excitement, it has enduring qualities. The spiritual preoccupations of many a voiceless

generation of New England Puritans found a tongue at last in this late-born son of theirs. The determining mood of his best poems, from boyhood to old age, was precisely that thought of transiency, "the eternal flow of things," which colored the imaginations of the first colonists. This is the central motive of *Thanatopsis*, *To a Waterfowl*, *The Rivulet*, *A Forest Hymn*, *An Evening Revery*, *The Crowded Street*, *The Flood of Years*. All of these tell the same story of endless change and of endless abiding, of varying eddies in the same mighty stream of human existence. Bryant faced the thought as calmly, as majestically, at seventeen as when he wrote *The Flood of Years* at eighty-two. He is a master of description, though he has slight gift for narrative or drama, and he rarely sounds the clear lyric note. But everywhere in his verse there is that cold purity of the winter hills in Western Massachusetts, something austere and elemental which reaches kindred spirits below the surface on which intellect and passion have their play, something more primitive, indeed, than human intellect or passion and belonging to another mode of being, something "rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun."

A picture of the Knickerbocker era is not com-

plete without its portraits of the minor figures in the literary life of New York up to the time of the Civil War. But the scope of the present volume does not permit sketches of Paulding and Verplanck, of Halleck and his friend Drake, of N. P. Willis and Morris and Woodworth. Some of these are today only "single-poem" men, like Payne, the author of *Home Sweet Home*, just as Key, the author of *The Star-Spangled Banner*, is today a "single-poem" man of an earlier generation. Their names will be found in such limbos of the dead as Griswold's *Poets and Poetry of America* and Poe's *Literati*. They knew "the town" in their day, and pleased its very easily pleased taste. The short-lived literary magazines of the eighteen-forties gave them their hour of glory. As representatives of passing phases of the literary history of New York their careers are not without sentimental interest, but few of them spoke to or for the country as a whole. Two figures, indeed, stand out in sharp contrast with those habitual strollers on Broadway and frequenters of literary gatherings, though each of them was for a while a part of Knickerbocker New York. To all appearances they were only two more Bohemians like the rest, but the curiosity of the twentieth

century sets them apart from their forgotten contemporaries. They are two of the unluckiest — and yet luckiest — authors who ever tried to sell a manuscript along Broadway. One of them is Edgar Allan Poe and the other is Walt Whitman. They shall have a chapter to themselves.

But before turning to that chapter, we must look back to New England once more and observe the blossoming-time of its ancient commonwealths. During the thirty years preceding the Civil War New England awoke to a new life of the spirit. So varied and rich was her literary productiveness in this era that it still remains her greatest period, and so completely did New England writers of this epoch voice the ideals of the nation that the great majority of Americans, even today, regard these New Englanders as the truest literary exponents of the mind and soul of the United States. We must take a look at them.

CHAPTER VI

THE TRANSCENDENTALISTS

To understand the literary leadership of New England during the thirty years immediately preceding the Civil War it is necessary to recall the characteristics of a somewhat isolated and peculiar people. The mental and moral traits of the New England colonists, already glanced at in an earlier chapter, had suffered little essential modification in two hundred years. The original racial stock was still dominant. As compared with the middle and southern colonies, there was relatively little immigration, and this was easily assimilated. The physical remoteness of New England from other sections of the country, and the stubborn loyalty with which its inhabitants maintained their own standards of life, alike contributed to their sense of separateness. It is true, of course, that their mode of thinking and feeling had undergone certain changes. They were among the

earliest theorists of political independence from Great Britain, and had done their share, and more, in the Revolution. The rigors of their early creed had somewhat relaxed, as we have seen, by the end of the seventeenth century, and throughout the eighteenth there was a gradual progress toward religious liberalism. The population steadily increased, and New England's unremitting struggle with a not too friendly soil, her hardihood upon the seas, and her keenness in trade, became proverbial throughout the country. Her seaport towns were wealthy. The general standards of living remained frugal, but extreme poverty was rare. Her people still made, as in the earliest days of the colonies, silent and unquestioned sacrifices for education, and her chief seats of learning, Harvard and Yale, remained the foremost educational centers of America. But there was still scant leisure for the quest of beauty, and slender material reward for any practitioner of the fine arts. Oratory alone, among the arts of expression, commanded popular interest and applause. Daniel Webster's audiences at Plymouth in 1820 and at Bunker Hill in 1825 were not inferior to similar audiences of today in intelligence and in responsiveness. Perhaps they were superior. Appreci-

ation of the spoken word was natural to men trained by generations of thoughtful listening to "painful" preaching and by participation in the discussions of town-meeting. Yet appreciation of secular literature was rare, and interest in the other arts was almost non-existent.

Then, beginning in the eighteen-twenties, and developing rapidly after 1830, came a change, a change so startling as to warrant the term of "the Renaissance of New England." No single cause is sufficient to account for this "new birth." It is a good illustration of that law of "tension and release," which the late Professor Shaler liked to demonstrate in all organic life. A long period of strain was followed by an age of expansion, freedom, release of energy. As far as the mental life of New England was concerned, something of the new stimulus was due directly to the influence of Europe. Just as the wandering scholars from Italy had brought the New Learning, which was a revival of the old learning, into England in the sixteenth century, so now young New England college men like Edward Everett and George Ticknor brought home from the Continent the riches of German and French scholarship. Emerson's description of the impression made by Everett's

lectures in 1820, after his return from Germany, gives a vivid picture of the new thirst for foreign culture. *The North American Review* and other periodicals, while persistently urging the need of a distinctively national literature, insisted also upon the value of a deeper knowledge of the literature of the Continent. This was the burden of Channing's once famous article on *A National Literature* in 1823: it was a plea for an independent American school of writers, but these writers should know the best that Europe had to teach.

The purely literary movement was connected, as the great name of Channing suggests, with a new sense of freedom in philosophy and religion. Calvinism had mainly done its work in New England. It had bred an extraordinary type of men and women, it had helped to lay some of the permanent foundations of our democracy, and it was still destined to have a long life in the new West and in the South. But in that stern section of the country where its influence had been most marked there was now an increasingly sharp reaction against its determinism and its pessimism. Early in the nineteenth century the most ancient and influential churches in Boston and the leading professors at Harvard had accepted the new form

of religious liberalism known as Unitarianism. The movement spread throughout Eastern Massachusetts and made its way to other States. Orthodox and liberal Congregational churches split apart, and when Channing preached the ordination sermon for Jared Sparks in Baltimore in 1819, the word Unitarian, accepted by the liberals with some misgiving, became the recognized motto of the new creed. It is only with its literary influence that we are here concerned, yet that literary influence became so potent that there is scarcely a New England writer of the first rank, from Bryant onward, who remained untouched by it.

The most interesting and peculiar phase of the new liberalism has little directly to do with the specific tenets of theological Unitarianism, and in fact marked a revolt against the more prosaic and conventional pattern of English and American Unitarian thought. But this movement, known as Transcendentalism, would have been impossible without a preliminary and liberalizing stirring of the soil. It was a fascinating moment of release for some of the most brilliant and radical minds of New England. Its foremost representative in our literature was Ralph Waldo Emerson, as its chief

exponents in England were Coleridge and Carlyle. We must understand its meaning if we would perceive the quality of much of the most noble and beautiful writing produced in New England during the Golden Age.

What then is the significance of the word Transcendental? Disregarding for the moment the technical development of this term as used by German and English philosophers, it meant for Emerson and his friends simply this: whatever transcends or goes beyond the experience of the senses. It stressed intuition rather than sensation, direct perception of ultimate truth rather than the processes of logic. It believed in man's ability to apprehend the absolute ideas of Truth, Rectitude, Goodness. It resembled the Inner Light of the Quaker, though the Quaker traced this to a supernatural illumination of the Holy Spirit, while the Transcendentalist believed that a vision of the eternal realities was a natural endowment of the human mind. It had only to be trusted. Stated in this form, it is evident that we have here a very ancient doctrine, well known in the literature of India and of Greece. It has been held by countless persons who have never heard of the word Transcendentalism. We need

go no further back than Alexander Pope, a Roman Catholic, whom we find declaring: "I am so certain of the soul's being immortal that I seem to feel it within me, as it were by intuition." Pope's friend Swift, a dean of the Church of England and assuredly no Transcendentalist, defined vision as seeing the things that are invisible.

Now turn to some of the New England men. Dr. C. A. Bartol, a disciple of Emerson, maintained that "the mistake is to make the everlasting things subjects of argument instead of sight." Theodore Parker declared to his congregation:

From the primitive facts of consciousness given by the power of instinctive intuition, I endeavored to deduce the true notion of God, of justice and futurity. . . . I found most help in the works of Immanuel Kant, one of the profoundest thinkers of the world, though one of the worst writers, even in Germany; if he did not always furnish conclusions I could rest in, he yet gave me the true method, and put me on the right road. I found certain great primal Intuitions of Human Nature, which depend on no logical process of demonstration, but are rather facts of consciousness given by the instinctive action of human nature itself. I will mention only the three most important which pertain to Religion. 1. The Instinctive Intuition of the Divine, the consciousness that there is a God. 2. The Instinctive Intuition of the Just and Right, a consciousness that there is a Moral Law, independent

of our will, which we ought to keep. 3. The **In-**stinctive Intuition of the Immortal, a consciousness that the Essential Element of man, the principle of Individuality, never dies.

This passage dates from 1859, and readers of Bergson may like to compare it with the contemporary Frenchman's saying: "The analytical faculties can give us no realities."

Let us next hear Emerson himself, first in an early letter to his brother Edward: "Do you draw the distinction of Milton, Coleridge, and the Germans between Reason and Understanding? I think it a philosophy itself, and, like all truth, very practical. Reason is the highest faculty of the soul, what we mean often by the soul itself: it never reasons, never proves, it simply perceives, it is vision. The understanding toils all the time, compares, contrives, adds, argues; near-sighted, but strong-sighted, dwelling in the present, the expedient, the customary." And in 1833, after he had left the Unitarian pulpit, Emerson made in his diary this curious attempt to reconcile the scriptural language of his ancestral profession to the new vocabulary of Transcendentalism: "Jesus Christ was a minister of the pure Reason. The beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount are all utterances of the

mind contemning the phenomenal world. . . . The understanding can make nothing of it. 'Tis all nonsense. The Reason affirms its absolute verity. . . . St. Paul marks the distinction by the terms natural man and spiritual man. When Novalis says, 'It is the instinct of the Understanding to contradict the Reason,' he only translates into a scientific formula the doctrine of St. Paul, 'The Carnal Mind is enmity against God.'"

One more quotation must suffice. It is from a poem by a forgotten Transcendentalist, F. G. Tuckerman.

No more thy meaning seek, thine anguish plead;
But, leaving straining thought and stammering word,
Across the barren azure pass to God;
Shooting the void in silence, like a bird—
A bird that shuts his wings for better speed!

It is obvious that this "contemning the phenomenal world," this "revulsion against the intellect as the sole source of truth," is highly dangerous to second-class minds. If one habitually prints the words Insight, Instinct, Intuition, Consciousness with capitals, and relegates equally useful words like senses, experience, fact, logic to lower-case type, one may do it because he is a

Carlyle or an Emerson, but the chances are that he is neither. Transcendentalism, like all idealistic movements, had its "lunatic fringe," its camp-followers of excitable, unstable visionaries. The very name, like the name Methodist, was probably bestowed upon it in mockery, and this whole perturbation of staid New England had its humorous side. Witness the career of Bronson Alcott. It is also true that the glorious affirmations of these seers can be neither proved nor disproved. They made no examination and they sought no validation of consciousness. An explorer in search of the North Pole must bring back proofs of his journey, but when a Transcendentalist affirms that he has reached the far heights of human experience and even caught sight of the gods sitting on their thrones, you and I are obliged to take his word for it. Sometimes we hear such a man gladly, but it depends upon the man, not upon the trustworthiness of the method. Finally it should be observed that the Transcendental movement was an exceedingly complex one, being both literary, philosophic, and religious; related also to the subtle thought of the Orient, to mediæval mysticism, and to the English Platonists; touched throughout by the French Revolu-

tionary theories, by the Romantic spirit, by the new zeal for science and pseudo-science, and by the unrest of a fermenting age.

Our present concern is with the impact of this cosmopolitan current upon the mind and character of a few New England writers. Channing and Theodore Parker, Margaret Fuller and Alcott, Thoreau and Emerson, are all representative of the best thought and the noblest ethical impulses of their generation. Let us choose first the greatest name: a sunward-gazing spirit, and, it may be, one of the very Sun-Gods.

The pilgrim to Concord who stops for a moment in the village library to study French's statue of Emerson will notice the asymmetrical face. On one side it is the face of a keen Yankee farmer, but seen from the other side it is the countenance of a seer, a world's man. This contrast between the parochial Emerson and the greater Emerson interprets many a puzzle in his career. Half a mile beyond the village green to the north, close to the "rude bridge" of the famous Concord fight in 1775, is the Old Manse, once tenanted and described by Hawthorne. It was built by Emerson's grandfather, a patriot chaplain in the Revolution, who died of camp-fever at Ticonderoga. His

widow married Dr. Ezra Ripley, and here Ralph Waldo Emerson and his brothers passed many a summer in their childhood. Half a mile east of the village, on the Cambridge turnpike, is Emerson's own house, still sheltered by the pines which Thoreau helped him to plant in 1838. Within the house everything is unchanged: here are the worn books, pen and inkstand, the favorite pictures upon the wall. Over the ridge to the north lies the Sleepy Hollow cemetery where the poet rests, with the gravestones of Hawthorne and the Alcotts, Thoreau and William James close by.

But although Concord is the Emerson shrine, he was born in Boston, in 1803. His father, named William like the grandfather, was also, like the Emerson ancestors for many generations, a clergyman—eloquent, liberal, fond of books and music, highly honored by his *alma mater* Harvard and by the town of Boston, where he ministered to the First Church. His premature death in 1811 left his widow with five sons—one of them feeble-minded—and a daughter to struggle hard with poverty. With her husband's sister, the Calvinistic "Aunt Mary Moody" Emerson, she held, however, that these orphaned boys had been

“born to be educated.” And educated the “eager blushing boys” were, at the Boston Latin School and at Harvard College, on a regimen of “toil and want and truth and mutual faith.” There are many worse systems of pedagogy than this. Ralph was thought less persistent than his steady older brother William, and far less brilliant than his gifted, short-lived younger brothers, Edward and Charles. He had an undistinguished career at Harvard, where he was graduated in 1821, ranking thirtieth in a class of fifty-nine. Lovers of irony like to remember that he was the seventh choice of his classmates for the position of class poet. After some desultory teaching to help his brothers, he passed irregularly through the Divinity School, his studies often interrupted by serious ill-health. “If they had examined me,” he said afterward of the kindly professors in the Divinity School, “they never would have passed me.” But approve him they did, in 1826, and he entered decorously upon the profession of his ancestors, as associate minister of the Second Church in Boston. His *Journals*, which are a priceless record of his inner life, at this and later periods, reveal the rigid self-scrutiny, the tender idealism, with which he began his ministerial career.

But as a scheme of life for Ralph Waldo Emerson this vocation would not satisfy. The sexton of the Second Church thought that the young man was not at his best at funerals. Father Taylor, the eccentric Methodist, whom Emerson assisted at a sailor's Bethel near Long Wharf, considered him "one of the sweetest souls God ever made," but as ignorant of the principles of the New Testament as Balaam's ass was of Hebrew grammar. By and by came an open difference with his congregation over the question of administering the Communion. "I am not interested in it," Emerson admitted, and he wrote in his *Journal* the noble words: "It is my desire, in the office of a Christian minister, to do nothing which I cannot do with my whole heart." His resignation was accepted in 1832. His young wife had died of consumption in the same year. He now sailed for Italy, France, and England, a memorable journey which gave him an acquaintance with Landor, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Carlyle, but which was even more significant in sending him, as he says, back to himself, to the resources of his own nature. "When shows break up," wrote Whitman afterward, "what but oneself is sure?" In 1834 and 1835 we find Emerson occupying a room

in the Old Manse at Concord, strolling in the quiet fields, lecturing or preaching if he were invited to do so, but chiefly absorbed in a little book which he was beginning to write — a new utterance of a new man.

This book, the now famous *Nature* of 1836, contains the essence of Emerson's message to his generation. It is a prose essay, but written in the ecstatic mood of a poet. The theme of its meditation is the soul as related to Nature and to God. The soul is primal; Nature, in all its bountiful and beautiful commodities, exists for the training of the soul; it is the soul's shadow. And every soul has immediate access to Deity. Thus the utility and beauty and discipline of Nature lift the soul Godward. The typical sentence of the book is this: "The sun shines today also"; that is to say: the world is still alive and fair; let us lift up our hearts! Only a few Americans of 1836 bought this singular volume, but Emerson went serenely forward. He had found his path.

In 1837 he delivered the well-known Phi Beta Kappa oration at Harvard on *The American Scholar*. Emerson was now thirty-four; he had married a second time, had bought a house of his own in Concord, and purposed to make a living by

lecturing and writing. His address in Cambridge, though it contained no reference to himself, was after all a justification of the way of life he had chosen: a declaration of intellectual independence for himself and his countrymen, an exhortation of self-trust to the individual thinking man. "If the single man plant himself indomitably on his instincts and there abide, the huge world will come round to him." Such advice to cut loose from the moorings of the past was not unknown in Phi Beta Kappa orations, though it had never been so brilliantly phrased; but when Emerson applied precisely the same doctrine, in 1838, to the graduating class at the Harvard Divinity School, he roused a storm of disapproval. "A tempest in our wash-bowl," he wrote coolly to Carlyle, but it was more than that. The great sentence of the Divinity School address, "God is, not was; he speaketh, not spake," was the emphasis of a superb rhetorician upon the immediacy of the soul's access to God. It has been the burden of a thousand prophets in all religions. The young priests of the Divinity School, their eyes wearied with Hebrew and Greek, seem to have enjoyed Emerson's injunction to turn away from past records and historical authorities and to drink from the living fountain

of the divine within themselves; but to the professors, "the stern old war-gods," this relative belittlement of historical Christianity seemed blasphemy. A generation passed before Emerson was again welcomed by his *alma mater*.

The reader who has mastered those three utterances by the Concord Transcendentalist in 1836, 1837, and 1838 has the key to Emerson. He was a seer, not a system-maker. The constitution of his mind forbade formal, consecutive, logical thought. He was not a philosopher in the accepted sense, though he was always philosophizing, nor a metaphysician in spite of his curious searchings in the realm of metaphysics. He sauntered in books as he sauntered by Walden Pond, in quest of what interested him; he "fished in Montaigne," he said, as he fished in Plato and Goethe. He basketed the day's luck, good or bad as it might be, into the pages of his private *Journal*, which he called his savings-bank, because from this source he drew most of the material for his books. The *Journal* has recently been printed, in ten volumes. No American writing rewards the reader more richly. It must be remembered that Emerson's *Essays*, the first volume of which appeared in 1841, and the last volumes after his death in 1882, re-

present practically three stages of composition: first the detached thoughts of the *Journal*; second, the rearrangement of this material for use upon the lecture platform; and finally, the essays in their present form. The oral method thus predominates: a series of oracular thoughts has been shaped for oratorical utterance, not oratorical in the bombastic, popular American sense, but cunningly designed, by a master of rhetoric, to capture the ear and then the mind of the auditor.

Emerson's work as a lecturer coincided with the rise of that Lyceum system which brought most of the American authors, for more than a generation, into intimate contact with the public, and which proved an important factor in the æsthetic and moral cultivation of our people. No lecturer could have had a more auspicious influence than Emerson, with his quiet dignity, his serene spiritual presence, his tonic and often electrifying force. But if he gave his audiences precious gifts, he also learned much from them. For thirty years his lecturing trips to the West brought him, more widely than any New England man of letters, into contact with the new, virile America of the great Mississippi valley. Unlike many of his friends, he was not repelled by the "Jacksonism of

the West"; he rated it a wholesome, vivifying force in our national thought and life. The *Journal* reveals the essential soundness of his Americanism. Though surrounded all his life by reformers, he was himself scarcely a reformer, save upon the single issue of anti-slavery. Perhaps he was at bottom too much of a radical to be swept off his feet by any reform.

To our generation, of course, Emerson presents himself as an author of books, and primarily as an essayist, rather than as a winning, entrancing speaker. His essays have a greater variety of tone than is commonly recognized. Many of them, like *Manners, Farming, Books, Eloquence, Old Age*, exhibit a shrewd prudential wisdom, a sort of Yankee instinct for "the milk in the pan," that reminds one of Ben Franklin. Like most of the greater New England writers, he could be, on occasion, an admirable local historian. See his essays on *Life and Letters in New England, New England Reformers, Politics*, and the successive entries in his *Journal* relating to Daniel Webster. He had the happiest gift of portraiture, as is witnessed by his sketches of Montaigne, of Napoleon, of Socrates (in the essay on Plato), of his aunt Mary Moody Emerson, of Thoreau, and of various types of

Englishmen in his *English Traits*. But the great essays, no doubt, are those like *Self-Reliance*, *Compensation*, *The Over-Soul*, *Fate*, *Power*, *Culture*, *Worship*, and *Illusions*. These will puzzle no one who has read carefully that first book on *Nature*. They all preach the gospel of intuition, instinctive trust in the Universe, faith in the ecstatic moment of vision into the things that are unseen by the physical eye. Self-reliance, as Emerson's son has pointed out, means really God-reliance; the Over-Soul—always a stumbling-block to Philistines—means that high spiritual life into which all men may enter and in which they share the life of Deity. Emerson is stern enough in expounding the laws of compensation that run through the universe, but to him the chief law is the law of the ever-ascending, victorious soul.

This radiant optimism permeates his poems. By temperament a singer as well as a seer and sayer, Emerson was nevertheless deficient in the singing voice. He composed no one great poem, his verse presents no ideas that are not found in his prose. In metre and rhyme he is harsh and willful. Yet he has marvelous single phrases and cadences. He ejaculates transports and ecstasies, and though he cannot organize and construct in verse, he is

capable here and there of the true miracle of transforming fact and thought into true beauty. Aldrich used to say that he would rather have written Emerson's *Bacchus* than any American poem.

That the pure, high, and tonic mind of Emerson was universal in its survey of human forces, no one would claim. Certain limitations in interest and sympathy are obvious. "That horrid burden and impediment of the soul which the churches call sin," to use John Morley's words, occupied his attention but little. Like a mountain climber in a perilous pass, he preferred to look up rather than down. He does not stress particularly those old human words, service and sacrifice. "Anti-scientific, anti-social, anti-Christian" are the terms applied to him by one of his most penetrating critics. Yet I should prefer to say "un-scientific," "un-social," and "non-Christian," in the sense in which Plato and Isaiah are non-Christian. Perhaps it would be still nearer the truth to say, as Mrs. Lincoln said of her husband, "He was not a technical Christian." He tends to underestimate institutions of every kind; history, except as a storehouse of anecdote, and culture as a steady mental discipline. This is the price he pays for his tran-

scendental insistence upon the supreme value of the Now, the moment of insight. But after all these limitations are properly set down, the personality of Ralph Waldo Emerson remains a priceless possession to his countrymen. The austere serenity of his life, and the perfection with which he represents the highest type of his province and his era, will ultimately become blended with the thought of his true Americanism. A democrat and liberator, like Lincoln, he seems also destined like Lincoln to become increasingly a world's figure, a friend and guide to aspiring spirits everywhere. Differences of race and creed are negligible in the presence of such superb confidence in God and the soul.

Citizens of Concord in May, 1862, hearing that Henry Thoreau, the eccentric bachelor, had just died of consumption in his mother's house on Main Street, in his forty-fifth year, would have smiled cannily at the notion that after fifty years their townsman's literary works would be published in a sumptuous twenty-volume edition, and that critics in his own country and in Europe would rank him with Ralph Waldo Emerson. Yet that is precisely what has happened. Our literature has no more curious story than the evolution of this local crank

into his rightful place of mastership. In his lifetime he printed only two books, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimac Rivers*—which was even more completely neglected by the public than Emerson's *Nature*—and *Walden*, now one of the classics, but only beginning to be talked about when its shy, proud author penned his last line and died with the words "moose" and "Indian" on his lips.

Thoreau, like all thinkers who reach below the surface of human life, means many different things to men of various temperaments. Collectors of human novelties, like Stevenson, rejoice in his uniqueness of flavor; critics, like Lowell, place him, not without impatient rigor. To some readers he is primarily a naturalist, an observer, of the White of Selborne school; to others an elemental man, a lover of the wild, a hermit of the woods. He has been called the poet-naturalist, to indicate that his powers of observation were accompanied, like Wordsworth's, by a gift of emotional interpretation of the meaning of phenomena. Lovers of literature celebrate his sheer force and penetration of phrase. But to the student of American thought Thoreau's prime value lies in the courage and consistency with which he endeavored to

realize the gospel of Transcendentalism in his own inner life.

Lovers of racial traits like to remember that Thoreau's grandfather was an immigrant Frenchman from the island of Jersey, and that his grandmother was Scotch and Quaker. His father made lead pencils and ground plumbago in his own house in Concord. The mother was from New Hampshire. It was a high-minded family. All the four children taught school and were good talkers. Henry, born in 1817, was duly baptized by good Dr. Ripley of the Old Manse, studied Greek and Latin, and was graduated at Harvard in 1837, the year of Emerson's Phi Beta Kappa address. Even in college the young man was a trifle difficult. "Cold and unimpressible," wrote a classmate. "The touch of his hand was moist and indifferent. He did not care for people." "An unfavorable opinion has been entertained of his disposition to exert himself," wrote President Quincy confidentially to Emerson in 1837, although the kindly President, a year later, in recommending Thoreau as a school-teacher, certified that "his rank was high as a scholar in all the branches and his morals and general conduct unexceptionable and exemplary."

Ten years passed. The young man gave up

school-keeping, thinking it a loss of time. He learned pencil-making, surveying, and farm work, and found that by manual labor for six weeks in the year he could meet all the expenses of living. He haunted the woods and pastures, explored rivers and ponds, built the famous hut on Emerson's wood-lot with the famous axe borrowed from Alcott, was put in jail for refusal to pay his poll-tax, and, to sum up much in little, "signed off" from social obligations. "I, Henry D. Thoreau, have signed off, and do not hold myself responsible to your multifarious uncivil chaos named Civil Government." When his college class held its tenth reunion in 1847, and each man was asked to send to the secretary a record of achievement, Thoreau wrote: "My steadiest employment, if such it can be called, is to keep myself at the top of my condition and ready for whatever may turn up in heaven or on earth." There is the motto of Transcendentalism, stamped upon a single coin.

For "to be ready for whatever may turn up" is Thoreau's racier, homelier version of Emerson's "endless seeker"; and Thoreau, more easily than Emerson, could venture to stake everything upon the quest. The elder man had announced the programme, but by 1847 he was himself almost

what Thoreau would call a "committed man," with family and household responsibilities, with a living to earn, and bound, like every professional writer and speaker, to have some measure of regard for his public. But Thoreau was ready to travel lightly and alone. If he should fail in the great adventure for spiritual perfection, it was his own affair. He had no intimates, no confidant save the multitudinous pages of his *Journal*, from which—and here again he followed Emerson's example—his future books were to be compiled. Many of his most loyal admirers will admit that such a quest is bound, by the very conditions of the problem, to be futile. Hawthorne allegorized it in *Ethan Brand*, and his quaint illustration of the folly of romantic expansion of the self apart from the common interests of human kind is the picture of a dog chasing its own tail. "It is time now that I begin to live," notes Thoreau in the *Journal*, and he continued to say it in a hundred different ways until the end of all his journalizing, but he never quite captured the fugitive felicity. The haunting pathos of his own allegory has moved every reader of *Walden*: "I long ago lost a hound, a bay horse, and a turtle-dove, and am still on their trail." Precisely what he meant it is now impos-

sible to say, but surely he betrays a doubt in the ultimate efficacy of his own system of life. He bends doggedly to the trail, for Henry Thoreau is no quitter, but the trail leads nowhere, and in the latest volumes of the *Journals* he seems to realize that he has been pursuing a phantom. He dived fearlessly and deep into himself, but somehow he failed to grasp that pearl of great price which all the transcendental prophets assured him was to be had at the cost of diving.

This is not to say that this austere and strenuous athlete came up quite empty-handed. Far from it. The by-products of his toil were enough to have enriched many lesser men, and they have given Thoreau a secure fame. From his boyhood he longed to make himself a writer, and an admirable writer he became. "For a long time," he says in *Walden*, "I was reporter to a journal, of no very wide circulation, whose editor has never seen fit to print the bulk of my contributions, and, as is too common with writers, I got only my labor for my pains. However, in this case my pains were their reward." Like so many solitaries, he experienced the joy of intense, long-continued effort in composition, and he was artist enough to know that his pages, carefully assembled from his note-

books, had pungency, form, atmosphere. No man of his day, not even Lowell the "last of the book-men," abandoned himself more unreservedly to the delight of reading. Thoreau was an accomplished scholar in the Greek and Roman classics, as his translations attest. He had some acquaintance with several modern languages, and at one time possessed the best collection of books on Oriental literature to be found in America. He was drenched in the English poetry of the seventeenth century. His critical essays in the *Dial*, his letters and the bookish allusions throughout his writings, are evidence of rich harvesting in the records of the past. He left some three thousand manuscript pages of notes on the American Indians, whose history and character had fascinated him from boyhood. Even his antiquarian hobbies gave him durable satisfaction. Then, too, he had deep delight in his life-long studies in natural history, in his meticulous measurements of river currents, in his notes upon the annual flowering of plants and the migration of birds. The more thoroughly trained naturalists of our own day detect him now and again in error as to his birds and plants, just as specialists in Maine woodcraft discover that he made amusing, and for him un-

accountable, blunders when he climbed Katahdin. But if he was not impeccable as a naturalist or woodsman, who has ever had more fun out of his enthusiasm than Thoreau, and who has ever stimulated as many men and women in the happy use of their eyes? He would have had slight patience with much of the sentimental nature study of our generation, and certainly an intellectual contempt for much that we read and write about the call of the wild; but no reader of his books can escape his infection for the freedom of the woods, for the stark and elemental in nature. Thoreau's passion for this aspect of life may have been selfish, wolf-like, but it is still communicative.

Once, toward the close of his too brief life, Thoreau "signed on" again to an American ideal, and no man could have signed more nobly. It was the cause of Freedom, as represented by John Brown of Harper's Ferry. The French and Scotch blood in the furtive hermit suddenly grew hot. Instead of renouncing in disgust the "uncivil chaos called Civil Government," Thoreau challenged it to a fight. Indeed he had already thrown down the gauntlet in *Slavery in Massachusetts*, which Garrison had published in the *Liberator* in 1854. And now the death upon the scaffold of the

old fanatic of Ossawatomie changed Thoreau into a complete citizen, arguing the case and glorifying to his neighbors the dead hero. "It seems as if no man had ever died in America before; for in order to die you must first have lived. . . . I hear a good many pretend that they are going to die. . . . Nonsense! I'll defy them to do it. They haven't got life enough in them. They'll deliquesce like fungi, and keep a hundred eulogists mopping the spot where they left off. Only half a dozen or so have died since the world began." Such passages as this reveal a very different Thoreau from the Thoreau who is supposed to have spent his days in the company of swamp-blackbirds and woodchucks. He had, in fact, one of the highest qualifications for human society, an absolute honesty of mind. "We select granite," he says, "for the underpinning of our houses and barns; we build fences of stone; but we do not ourselves rest on an underpinning of granite truth, the lowest primitive rock. Our sills are rotten. . . . In proportion as our inward life fails, we go more constantly and desperately to the post-office. You may depend upon it, that the poor fellow who walks away with the greatest number of letters, proud of his extensive

correspondence, has not heard from himself this long time."

This hard, basic individualism was for Thoreau the foundation of all enduring social relations, and the dullest observer of twentieth century America can see that Thoreau's doctrine is needed as much as ever. His sharp-edged personality provokes curiosity and pricks the reader into dissent or emulation as the case may be, but its chief ethical value to our generation lies in the fact that here was a Transcendentalist who stressed, not the life of the senses, though he was well aware of their seductiveness, but the stubborn energy of the will.

The scope of the present book prevents more than a glimpse at the other members of the New England Transcendental group. They are a very mixed company, noble, whimsical, queer, impossible. "The good Alcott," wrote Carlyle, "with his long, lean face and figure, with his gray worn temples and mild radiant eyes; all bent on saving the world by a return to acorns and the golden age; he comes before one like a venerable Don Quixote, whom nobody can laugh at without loving." These words paint a whole company, as well as a single man. The good Alcott still awaits an adequate biographer. Connecticut Yankee, peddler

in the South, school-teacher in Boston and elsewhere, he descended upon Concord, flitted to the queer community of Fruitlands, was starved back to Concord, inspired and bored the patient Emerson, talked endlessly, wrote ineffective books, and had at last his apotheosis in the Concord School of Philosophy, but was chiefly known for the twenty years before his death in 1888 as the father of the Louisa Alcott who wrote *Little Women*. "A tedious archangel," was Emerson's verdict, and it is likely to stand.

Margaret Fuller, though sketched by Hawthorne, analyzed by Emerson, and painted at full length by Thomas Wentworth Higginson, is now a fading figure — a remarkable woman, no doubt, one of the first of American feminists, suggesting George Eliot in her physical unattractiveness, her clear brain, her touch of sensuousness. She was an early-ripe, over-crammed scholar in the classics and in modern European languages. She did loyal, unpaid work as the editor of the *Dial*, which from 1840 to 1844 was the organ of Transcendentalism. She joined the community at Brook Farm, whose story has been so well told by Lindsay Swift. For a while she served as literary editor of the *New York Tribune* under Horace Greeley.

Then she went abroad, touched Rousseau's manuscripts at Paris with trembling, adoring fingers, made a secret marriage in Italy with the young Marquis Ossoli, and perished by shipwreck, with her husband and child, off Fire Island in 1850.

Theodore Parker, like Alcott and "Margaret," an admirable Greek scholar, an idealist and reformer, still lives in Chadwick's biography, in Colonel Higginson's delightful essay, and in the memories of a few liberal Bostonians who remember his tremendous sermons on the platform of the old Music Hall. He was a Lexington farmer's son, with the temperament of a blacksmith, with enormous, restless energy, a good hater, a passionate lover of all excellent things save meekness. He died at fifty, worn out, in Italy.

But while these three figures were, after Emerson and Thoreau, the most representative of the group, the student of the Transcendental period will be equally interested in watching its influence upon many other types of young men: upon future journalists and publicists like George William Curtis, Charles A. Dana, and George Ripley; upon religionists like Orestes Brownson, Father Hecker, and James Freeman Clarke; and upon poets like Jones Very, Christopher P. Cranch, and

Ellery Channing. There was a sunny side of the whole movement, as T. W. Higginson and F. B. Sanborn, two of the latest survivors of the ferment, loved to emphasize in their talk and in their books; and it was shadowed also by tragedy and the pathos of unfulfilled desires. But as one looks back at it, in the perspective of three-quarters of a century, it seems chiefly something touchingly fine. For all these men and women tried to hitch their wagon to a star.

CHAPTER VII

ROMANCE, POETRY, AND HISTORY

MOVING in and out of the Transcendentalist circles, in that great generation preceding the Civil War, were a company of other men — romancers, poets, essayists, historians — who shared in the intellectual liberalism of the age, but who were more purely artists in prose and verse than they were seekers after the unattainable. Hawthorne, for example, sojourned at Concord and at Brook Farm with some of the most extreme types of transcendental extravagance. The movement interested him artistically and he utilized it in his romances, but personally he maintained an attitude of cool detachment from it. Longfellow was too much of an artist to lose his head over philosophical abstractions; Whittier, at his best, had a too genuine poetic instinct for the concrete; and Lowell and Holmes had the saving gift of humor. Cultivated Boston gentlemen like Prescott, Motley, and

Parkman preferred to keep their feet on the solid earth and write admirable histories. So the mellow years went by. Most of the widely-read American books were being produced within twenty miles of the Boston State House. The slavery issue kept growling, far away, but it was only now and then, as in the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, that it was brought sharply home to the North. The "golden forties" were as truly golden for New England as for idle California. There was wealth, leisure, books, a glow of harvest-time in the air, though the spirit of the writers is the spirit of youth.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, our greatest writer of pure romance, was Puritan by inheritance and temperament, though not in doctrine or in sympathy. His literary affiliations were with the English and German Romanticists, and he possessed, for professional use, the ideas and vocabulary of his transcendental friends. Born in Salem in 1804, he was descended from Judge Hawthorne of Salem Witchcraft fame, and from a long line of sea-faring ancestors. He inherited a morbid solitariness, redeemed in some measure by a physical endowment of rare strength and beauty. He read Spenser, Rousseau, and the *Newgate Cal-*

endar, was graduated at Bowdoin, with Longfellow, in the class of 1825, and returned to Salem for thirteen brooding lonely years in which he tried to teach himself the art of story-writing. His earliest tales, like Irving's, are essays in which characters emerge; he is absorbed in finding a setting for a preconceived "moral"; he is in love with allegory and parable. His own words about his first collection of stories, *Twice-Told Tales*, have often been quoted: "They have the pale tint of flowers that blossomed in too retired a shade." Yet they are for the most part exquisitely written. After a couple of years in the Boston Custom-House, and a residence at the socialistic community of Brook Farm, Hawthorne made the happiest of marriages to Sophia Peabody, and for nearly four years dwelt in the Old Manse at Concord. He described it in one of the ripest of his essays, the Preface to *Mosses from an Old Manse*, his second collection of stories. After three years in the Custom-House at Salem, his dismissal in 1849 gave him leisure to produce his masterpiece, *The Scarlet Letter*, published in 1850. He was now forty-six. In 1851, he published *The House of the Seven Gables*, *The Wonder-Book*, and *The Snow-Image, and Other Tales*. In 1852 came *The*

Blithedale Romance, a rich ironical story drawn from his Brook Farm experience. Four years in the American Consulate at Liverpool and three subsequent years of residence upon the Continent saw no literary harvest except carefully filled notebooks and the deeply imaginative moral romance, *The Marble Faun*. Hawthorne returned home in 1860 and settled in the Wayside at Concord, busying himself with a new, and, as was destined, a never completed story about the elixir of immortality. But his vitality was ebbing, and in May, 1864, he passed away in his sleep. He rests under the pines in Sleepy Hollow, near the Alcotts and the Emersons.

It is difficult for contemporary Americans to assess the value of such a man, who evidently did nothing except to write a few books. His rare, delicate genius was scarcely touched by passing events. Not many of his countrymen really love his writings, as they love, for instance the writings of Dickens or Thackeray or Stevenson. Everyone reads, at some time of his life, *The Scarlet Letter*, and trembles at its passionate indictment of the sin of concealment, at its agonized admonition, "Be true! Be true!" Perhaps the happiest memories of Hawthorne's readers, as of Kipling's

readers, hover about his charming stories for children; to have missed *The Wonder-Book* is like having grown old without ever catching the sweetness of the green world at dawn. But our public has learned to enjoy a wholly different kind of style, taught by the daily journals, a nervous, graphic, sensational, physical style, fit for describing an automobile, a department store, a steamship, a lynching party. It is the style of our day, and judged by it Hawthorne, who wrote with severity, conscience, and good taste, seems somewhat old-fashioned, like Irving or Addison. He is perhaps too completely a New Englander to be understood by men of other stock, and has never, like Poe and Whitman, excited strong interest among European minds.

Yet no American is surer, generation after generation, of finding a fit audience. Hawthorne's genius was meditative rather than dramatic. His artistic material was moral rather than physical; he brooded over the soul of man as affected by this and that condition and situation. The child of a new analytical age, he thought out with rigid accuracy the precise circumstances surrounding each one of his cases and modifying it. Many of his sketches and short stories and most of his

romances deal with historical facts, moods, and atmospheres, and he knew the past of New England as few men have ever known it. There is solid historical and psychological stuff as the foundation of his air-castles. His latent radicalism furnished him with a touchstone of criticism as he interpreted the moral standards of ancient communities; no reader of *The Scarlet Letter* can forget Hawthorne's implicit condemnation of the unimaginative harshness of the Puritans. His own judgment upon the deep matters of the human conscience was stern enough, but it was a universalized judgment, and by no means the result of a Calvinism which he hated. Over-fond as he was in his earlier tales of elaborate, fanciful, decorative treatment of themes that promised to point a moral, in his finest short stories, such as *The Ambitious Guest*, *The Gentle Boy*, *Young Goodman Brown*, *The Snow Image*, *The Great Stone Face*, *Drowne's Wooden Image*, *Rappacini's Daughter*, the moral, if there be one, is not obtruded. He loves physical symbols for mental and moral states, and was poet and Transcendentalist enough to retain his youthful affection for parables; but his true field as a story-teller is the erring, questing, aspiring, shadowed human heart.

The Scarlet Letter, for instance, is a study of a universal theme, the problem of concealed sin, punishment, redemption. Only the setting is provincial. The story cannot be rightly estimated, it is true, without remembering the Puritan reverence for physical purity, the Puritan reverence for the magistrate-minister — differing so widely from the respect of Latin countries for the priest — the Puritan preoccupation with the life of the soul, or, as more narrowly construed by Calvinism, the problem of evil. The word Adultery, although suggestively enough present in one of the finest symbolical titles ever devised by a romancer, does not once occur in the book. The sins dealt with are hypocrisy and revenge. Arthur Dimmesdale, Hester Prynne, and Roger Chillingworth are developing, suffering, living creatures, caught inextricably in the toils of a moral situation. By an incomparable succession of pictures Hawthorne exhibits the travail of their souls. In the greatest scene of all, that between Hester and Arthur in the forest, the Puritan framework of the story gives way beneath the weight of human passion, and we seem on the verge of another and perhaps larger solution than was actually worked out by the logic of succeeding events. But though the

book has been called Christless, prayerless, hopeless, no mature person ever reads it without a deepened sense of the impotence of all mechanistic theories of sin, and a new vision of the intense reality of spiritual things. "The law we broke," in Dimmesdale's ghostly words, was a more subtle law than can be graven on tables of stone and numbered as the Seventh Commandment.

The legacy of guilt is likewise the theme of *The House of the Seven Gables*, which Hawthorne himself was inclined to think a better book than *The Scarlet Letter*. Certainly this story of old Salem is impeccably written and its subtle handling of tone and atmosphere is beyond dispute. An ancestral curse, the visitation of the sins of the fathers upon the children, the gradual decay of a once sound stock, are motives that Ibsen might have developed. But the Norseman would have failed to rival Hawthorne's delicate manipulation of his shadows, and the no less masterly deftness of the ultimate mediation of a dark inheritance through the love of the light-hearted Phœbe for the latest descendant of the Maules. In *The Blithedale Romance* Hawthorne stood for once, perhaps, too near his material to allow the rich atmospheric effects which he prefers, and in spite of the unfor-

getable portrait of Zenobia and powerful passages of realistic description, the book is not quite focussed. In *The Marble Faun* Hawthorne comes into his own again. Its central problem is one of those dark insoluble ones that he loves: the influence of a crime upon the development of a soul. Donatello, the Faun, is a charming young creature of the natural sunshine until his love for the somber Miriam tempts him to the commission of murder: then begins the growth of his mind and character. Perhaps the haunting power of the main theme of the book has contributed less to its fame than the felicity of its descriptions of Rome and Italy. For Hawthorne possessed, like Byron, in spite of his defective training in the appreciation of the arts, a gift of romantic discernment which makes *The Marble Faun*, like *Childe Harold*, a glorified guide-book to the Eternal City.

All of Hawthorne's books, in short, have a central core of psychological romance, and a rich surface finish of description. His style, at its best, has a subdued splendor of coloring which is only less wonderful than the spiritual perceptions with which this magician was endowed. The gloom which haunts many of his pages, as I have said elsewhere, is the long shadow cast by our mortal

destiny upon a sensitive soul. The mystery is our mystery, perceived, and not created, by that finely endowed mind and heart. The shadow is our shadow; the gleams of insight, the soft radiance of truth and beauty, are his own.

A college classmate of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow summed up the Portland boy's character in one sentence: "It appeared easy for him to avoid the unworthy." Born in 1807, of *Mayflower* stock that had distinguished itself for bravery and uprightness, the youth was graduated from Bowdoin at eighteen. Like his classmate Hawthorne, he had been a wide and secretly ambitious reader, and had followed the successive numbers of Irving's *Sketch Book*, he tells us, "with ever increasing wonder and delight." His college offered him in 1826 a professorship of the modern languages, and he spent three happy years in Europe in preparation. He taught successfully at Bowdoin for five or six years, and for eighteen years, 1836 to 1854, served as George Ticknor's successor at Harvard, ultimately surrendering the chair to Lowell. He early published two prose volumes, *Hyperion* and *Outre-mer*, Irvingesque romances of European travel. Then came, after ten years of teaching and the death

of his young wife, the sudden impulse to write poetry, and he produced, "softly excited, I know not why," *The Reaper and the Flowers, a Psalm of Death*. From that December morning in 1838 until his death in 1882 he was Longfellow the Poet.

His outward life, like Hawthorne's, was barren of dramatic incident, save the one tragic accident by which his second wife, the mother of his children, perished before his eyes in 1861. He bore the calamity with the quiet courage of his race and breeding. But otherwise his days ran softly and gently, enriched with books and friendships, sheltered from the storms of circumstance. He had leisure to grow ripe, to remember, and to dream. But he never secluded himself, like Tennyson, from normal contacts with his fellow-men. The owner of the Craigie House was a good neighbor, approachable and deferential. He was even interested in local Cambridge politics. On the larger political issues of his day his Americanism was sound and loyal. "It is disheartening," he wrote in his Cambridge journal for 1851, "to see how little sympathy there is in the hearts of the young men here for freedom and great ideas." But his own sympathy never wavered.

His linguistic talent helped him to penetrate the secrets of alien ways of thought and speech. He understood Italy and Spain, Holland and France and Germany. He had studied them on the lips of their living men and women and in the books where soldier and historian, priest and poet, had inscribed the record of five hundred years. From the Revival of Learning to the middle of the nineteenth century, Longfellow knew the soul of Europe as few men have known it, and he helped to translate Europe to America. His intellectual receptivity, his quick eye for color and costume and landscape, his ear for folk-lore and ballad, his own ripe mastery of words, made him the most resourceful of international interpreters. And this lover of children, walking in quiet ways, this refined and courteous host and gentleman, scholar and poet, exemplified without self-advertisement the richer qualities of his own people. When Couper's statue of Longfellow was dedicated in Washington, Hamilton Mabie said: "His freedom from the sophistication of a more experienced country; his simplicity, due in large measure to the absence of social self-consciousness; his tranquil and deep-seated optimism, which is the effluence of an unexhausted soil; his

happy and confident expectation, born of a sense of tremendous national vitality; his love of simple things in normal relations to world-wide interests of the mind; his courage in interpreting those deeper experiences which craftsmen who know art but who do not know life call commonplaces; the unaffected and beautiful democracy of his spirit—these are the delicate flowers of our new world, and as much a part of it as its stretches of wilderness and the continental roll of its rivers.”

Longfellow's poetic service to his countrymen has thus become a national asset, and not merely because in his three best known narrative poems, *Evangeline*, *Hiawatha*, and *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, he selected his themes from our own history. *The Building of the Ship*, written with full faith in the troubled year of 1849, is a national anthem. “It is a wonderful gift,” said Lincoln, as he listened to it, his eyes filled with tears, “to be able to stir men like that.” *The Skeleton in Armor*, *A Ballad of the French Fleet*, *Paul Revere's Ride*, *The Wreck of the Hesperus*, are ballads that stir men still. For all of his skill in story-telling in verse—witness the *Tales of a Wayside Inn*—Longfellow was not by nature a dramatist, and his trilogy now published under the title of *Christus*,

made up of *The Divine Tragedy*, *The Golden Legend*, and *New England Tragedies*, added little to a reputation won in other fields. His sonnets, particularly those upon *Chaucer*, *Milton*, *The Divina Commedia*, *A Nameless Grave*, *Felton*, *Sumner*, *Nature*, *My Books*, are among the imperishable treasures of the English language. In descriptive pieces like *Keramos* and *The Hanging of the Crane*, in such personal and occasional verses as *The Herons of Elmwood*, *The Fiftieth Birthday of Agassiz*, and the noble *Morituri Salutamus* written for his classmates in 1875, he exhibits his tenderness of affection and all the ripeness of his technical skill. But it was as a lyric poet, after all, that he won and held his immense audience throughout the English-speaking world. Two of the most popular of all his early pieces, *The Psalm of Life* and *Excelsior*, have paid the price of a too apt adjustment to the ethical mood of an earnest moment in our national life. We have passed beyond them. And many readers may have outgrown their youthful pleasure in *Maidenhood*, *The Rainy Day*, *The Bridge*, *The Day is Done*, verses whose simplicity lent themselves temptingly to parody. Yet such poems as *The Belfry of Bruges*, *Seaweed*, *The Fire of Driftwood*, *The Arsenal at Springfield*, *My Lost Youth*,

The Children's Hour, and many another lyric, lose nothing with the lapse of time. There is fortunately infinite room for personal preference in this whole matter of poetry, but the confession of a lack of regard for Longfellow's verse must often be recognized as a confession of a lessening love for what is simple, graceful, and refined. The current of contemporary American taste, especially among consciously clever, half-trained persons, seems to be running against Longfellow. How soon the tide may turn, no one can say. Meanwhile he has his tranquil place in the Poet's Corner of Westminster Abbey. The Abbey must be a pleasant spot to wait in, for the Portland boy.

Oddly enough, some of the over-sophisticated and under-experienced people who affect to patronize Longfellow assume toward John Greenleaf Whittier an air of deference. This attitude would amuse the Quaker poet. One can almost see his dark eyes twinkle and the grim lips tighten in that silent laughter in which the old man so much resembled Cooper's Leather-Stocking. Whittier knew that his friend Longfellow was a better artist than himself, and he also knew, by intimate experience as a maker of public opinion, how variable are its judgments.

Whittier represents a stock different from that of the Longfellows, but equally American, equally thoroughbred: the Essex County Quaker farmer of Massachusetts. The homestead in which he was born in 1807, at East Haverhill, had been built by his great-great-grandfather in 1688. Mount Vernon in Virginia and the Craigie House in Cambridge are newer than this by two generations. The house has been restored to the precise aspect it had in Whittier's boyhood: and the garden, lawn, and brook, even the door-stone and bridle-post and the barn across the road are witnesses to the fidelity of the descriptions in *Snow-Bound*. The neighborhood is still a lonely one. The youth grew up in seclusion, yet in contact with a few great ideas, chief among them Liberty. "My father," he said, "was an old-fashioned Democrat, and really believed in the Preamble of the Bill of Rights which reaffirmed the Declaration of Independence." The taciturn father transmitted to his sons a hatred of kingcraft and priestcraft, the inward moral freedom of the Quaker touched with humanitarian passion. The spirit of a boyhood in this homestead is veraciously told in *The Barefoot Boy*, *School-Days*, *Snow-Bound*, *Ramoth Hill*, and *Telling the Bees*. It was a chance

copy of Burns that revealed to the farmer lad his own desire and capacity for verse-writing. When he was nineteen, his sister sent his *Exile's Departure* to William Lloyd Garrison, then twenty, and the editor of the *Newburyport Free Press*. The neighbors liked it, and the tall frail author was rewarded with a term at the Haverhill Academy, where he paid his way, in old Essex County fashion, by making shoes.

He had little more formal schooling than this, was too poor to enter college, but had what he modestly called a "knack at rhyming," and much facility in prose. He turned to journalism and politics, for which he possessed a notable instinct. For a while he thought he had "done with poetry and literature." Then in 1833, at twenty-six, came Garrison's stirring letter bidding him enlist in the cause of Anti-Slavery. He obeyed the call, not knowing that this new allegiance to the service of humanity was to transform him from a facile local verse-writer into a national poet. It was the ancient miracle of losing one's life and finding it. For the immediate sacrifice was very real to a youth trained in quietism and non-resistance, and well aware, as a Whig journalist, of the ostracism visited upon the active

Abolitionists. Whittier entered the fight with absolute courage and with the shrewdest practical judgment of weapons and tactics. He forgot himself. He turned aside from those pleasant fields of New England legend and history to which he was destined to return after his warfare was accomplished. He had read the prose of Milton and of Burke. He perceived that negro emancipation in the United States was only a single and immediate phase of a universal movement of liberalism. The thought kindled his imagination. He wrote, at white heat, political and social verse that glowed with humanitarian passion: lyrics in praise of fellow-workers, salutes to the dead, campaign songs, hymns, satires against the clergy and the capitalists, superb sectional poems like *Massachusetts to Virginia*, and, more nobly still, poems embodying what Wordsworth called "the sensation and image of country and the human race."

Whittier had now "found himself" as a poet. It is true that his style remained diffuse and his ear faulty, but his countrymen, then as now uncritical of artistic form, overlooked the blemishes of his verse, and thought only of his vibrant emotion, his scorn of cowardice and evil, his

prophetic exaltation. In 1847 came the first general collection of his poems, and here were to be found not merely controversial verses, but spirited *Songs of Labor*, pictures of the lovely Merrimac countryside, legends written in the mood of Hawthorne or Longfellow, and bright bits of foreign lore and fancy. For though Whittier never went abroad, his quiet life at Amesbury gave him leisure for varied reading, and he followed contemporary European politics with the closest interest. He emerged more and more from the atmosphere of faction and section, and, though he retained to the last his Quaker creed, he held its simple tenets in such undogmatic and winning fashion that his hymns are sung today in all the churches.

When *The Atlantic Monthly* was established in 1857, Whittier was fifty. He took his place among the contributors to the new magazine not as a controversialist but as a man of letters, with such poems as *Tritemius*, and *Skipper Ireson's Ride*. Characteristic productions of this period are *My Psalm*, *Cobbler Keezar's Vision*, *Andrew Rykman's Prayer*, *The Eternal Goodness*—poems grave, sweet, and tender. But it was not until the publication of *Snow-Bound* in 1866 that Whittier's

work touched its widest popularity. He had never married, and the deaths of his mother and sister Elizabeth set him brooding, in the desolate Amesbury house, over memories of his birthplace, six miles away in East Haverhill. The homestead had gone out of the hands of the Whittiers, and the poet, nearing sixty, set himself to compose an idyll descriptive of the vanished past. No artist could have a theme more perfectly adapted to his mood and to his powers. There are no novel ideas in *Snow-Bound*, nor is there any need of them, but the thousands of annual pilgrims to the old farmhouse can bear witness to the touching intimacy, the homely charm, the unerring rightness of feeling with which Whittier's genius recreated his own lost youth and painted for all time a true New England hearthside.

Whittier was still to write nearly two hundred more poems, for he lived to be eighty-five, and he composed until the last. But his creative period was now over. He rejoiced in the friendly recognition of his work that came to him from every section of a reunited country. His personal friends were loyal in their devotion. He followed the intricacies of American politics with the keen

zest of a veteran in that game, for in his time he had made and unmade governors and senators. "The greatest politician I have ever met," said James G. Blaine, who had certainly met many. He had an income from his poems far in excess of his needs, but retained the absolute simplicity of his earlier habits. When his publishers first proposed the notable public dinner in honor of his seventieth birthday he demurred, explaining to a member of his family that he did not want the bother of "buying a new pair of pants"—a petty anecdote, but somehow refreshing. So the rustic, shrewd, gentle old man waited for the end. He had known what it means to toil, to fight, to renounce, to eat his bread in tears, and to see some of his dreams come true. We have had, and shall have, more accomplished craftsmen in verse, but we have never bred a more genuine man than Whittier, nor one who had more kinship with the saints.

A few days before Whittier's death, he wrote an affectionate poem in celebration of the eighty-third birthday of his old friend of the Saturday Club, Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes. This was in 1892. The little Doctor, rather lonely in his latest years, composed some tender obituary verses

at Whittier's passing. He had already performed the same office for Lowell. He lingered himself until the autumn of 1894, in his eighty-sixth year—*The Last Leaf*, in truth, of New England's richest springtime.

"No, my friends," he had said in *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*, "I go (always, other things being equal) for the man who inherits family traditions and the cumulative humanities of at least four or five generations." The Doctor came naturally by his preference for a "man of family," being one himself. He was a descendant of Anne Bradstreet, the poetess. "Dorothy Q.," whom he had made the most picturesque of the Quincys, was his great-grandmother. Wendell Phillips was his cousin. His father, the Rev. Abiel Holmes, a Yale graduate, was the minister of the First Church in Cambridge, and it was in its "gambrel-roofed" parsonage that Oliver Wendell was born in 1809.

Know old Cambridge? Hope you do.—
Born there? Don't say so! I was, too.

Nicest place that was ever seen—
Colleges red and Common green.

So he wrote, in scores of passages of filial devotion, concerning the village of his boyhood and the

city of Boston. His best-known prose sentence is: "Boston State House is the hub of the Solar System." It is easy to smile, as indeed he did himself, at such fond provinciality, but the fact remains that our literature as a whole sadly needs this richness of local atmosphere. A nation of restless immigrants, here today and "moved on" tomorrow, has the fibres of its imagination uprooted, and its artists in their eager quest of "local color" purchase brilliancy at the cost of thinness of tone, poverty of association. Philadelphia and Boston, almost alone among the larger American cities, yield the sense of intimacy, or what the Autocrat would call "the cumulative humanities."

Young Holmes became the pet and the glory of his class of 1829 at Harvard. It was only in 1838 that their reunions began, but thereafter they held fifty-six meetings, of which Holmes attended fifty and wrote poems for forty-three. Many of "the Boys" whom he celebrated became famous in their own right, but they remain "the Boys" to all lovers of Holmes's verses. His own career as a poet had begun during his single year in the Law School. His later years brought him some additional skill in polishing his lines and a riper human

wisdom, but his native verse-making talent is as completely revealed in *Old Ironsides*, published when he was twenty-one, and in *The Last Leaf*, composed a year or two later, as in anything he was to write during the next half-century. In many respects he was a curious survival of the cumulative humanities of the eighteenth century. He might have been, like good Dr. Arbuthnot, an ornament of the Augustan age. He shared with the English Augustans a liking for the rhymed couplet, an instinctive social sense, a feeling for the presence of an imaginary audience of congenial listeners. One still catches the "Hear! Hear!" between his clever lines. In many of the traits of his mind this "Yankee Frenchman" resembled such a typical eighteenth century figure as Voltaire. Like Voltaire, he was tolerant—except toward Calvinism and Homeopathy. In some of the tricks of his prose style he is like a kindlier Sterne. His knack for *vers de société* was caught from Horace, but he would not have been a child of his own age without the additional gift of rhetoric and eloquence which is to be seen in his patriotic poems and his hymns. For Holmes possessed, in spite of all his limitations in poetic range, true devotion, patriotism, humor, and pathos.

His poetry was in the best sense of the word "occasional," and his prose was only an incidental or accidental harvest of a long career in which his chief duty was that of a professor of anatomy in the Harvard Medical School. He had studied in Paris under sound teachers, and after some years of private practice won the appointment which he held, as active and emeritus professor, for forty-seven years. He was a faithful, clear, and amusing lecturer, and printed two or three notable medical essays, but his chief Boston reputation, in the eighteen-fifties, was that of a wit and diner-out and writer of verses for occasions. Then came his great hour of good luck in 1857, when Lowell, the editor of the newly-established *Atlantic Monthly*, persuaded him to write *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*. It was the public's luck also, for whoever had been so unfortunate as not to be born in Boston could now listen—as if across the table—to Boston's best talker. Few volumes of essays during the last sixty years have given more pleasure to a greater variety of readers than is yielded by *The Autocrat*. It gave the Doctor a reputation in England which he naturally prized, and which contributed to his triumphal English progress, many years later, recorded pleasantly in

Our Hundred Days. *The Professor at the Breakfast Table* and *The Poet at the Breakfast Table* are less successful variations of *The Autocrat*. Neither professors nor poets are at their best at this meal. Holmes wrote three novels—of which *Elsie Venner*, a somewhat too medical story, is the best remembered—memoirs of his friends Emerson and Motley, and many miscellaneous essays. His life was exceptionally happy, and his cheery good opinion of himself is still contagious. To pronounce the words Doctor Holmes in any company of intelligent Americans is the prologue to a smile of recognition, comprehension, sympathy. The word Goldsmith has now lost, alas, this provocative quality; the word Stevenson still possesses it. The little Doctor, who died in the same year as Stevenson, belonged like him to the genial race of friends of mankind, and a few of his poems, and some gay warm-hearted pages of his prose, will long preserve his memory. But the Boston which he loved has vanished as utterly as Sam Johnson's London.

James Russell Lowell was ten years younger than Holmes, and though he died three years before the Doctor, he seems, for other reasons than those of chronology, to belong more nearly to the

present. Although by birth as much of a New England Brahmin as Holmes, and in his later years as much of a Boston and Cambridge idol, he nevertheless touched our universal American life on many sides, represented us worthily in foreign diplomacy, argued the case of Democracy with convincing power, and embodied, as more perfect artists like Hawthorne and Longfellow could never have done, the subtleties and potencies of the national temperament. He deserves and reveals the closest scrutiny, but his personality is difficult to put on paper. Horace Scudder wrote his biography with careful competence, and Ferris Greenslet has made him the subject of a brilliant critical study. Yet readers differ widely in their assessment of the value of his prose and verse, and in their understanding of his personality.

The external facts of his career are easy to trace and must be set down here with brevity. A minister's son, and descended from a very old and distinguished family, he was born at Elmwood in Cambridge in 1819. After a somewhat turbulent course, he was graduated from Harvard in 1838, the year of Emerson's *Divinity School Address*. He studied law, turned Abolitionist, wrote poetry, married the beautiful and transcen-

dental Maria White, and did magazine work in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. He was thought by his friends in the eighteen-fifties to be "the most Shakespearian" man in America. When he was ten years out of college, in 1848; he published *The Biglow Papers* (First Series), *A Fable for Critics*, and *The Vision of Sir Launfal*. After a long visit to Europe and the death of his wife, he gave some brilliant Lowell Institute lectures in Boston, and was appointed Longfellow's successor at Harvard. He went to Europe again to prepare himself, and after entering upon his work as a teacher made a happy second marriage, served for four years as the first editor of *The Atlantic*, and helped his friend Charles Eliot Norton edit *The North American Review*. The Civil War inspired a second series of *Biglow Papers* and the magnificent *Commemoration Ode* of 1865. Then came volume after volume of literary essays, such as *Among My Books* and *My Study Windows*, and an occasional book of verse. Again he made a long sojourn in Europe, resigned his Harvard professorship, and in 1877 was appointed Minister to Spain. After three years he was transferred to the most important post in our diplomatic service, London. He performed his duties with

extraordinary skill and success until 1885, when he was relieved. His last years were spent in Elmwood, the Cambridge house where he was born, and he was still writing, in almost as rich a vein as ever, when the end came in 1891.

Here was certainly a full and varied life, responsive to many personal moods and many tides of public feeling. Lowell drew intellectual stimulus from enormously wide reading in classical and modern literatures. Puritanically earnest by inheritance, he seems also to have inherited a strain of levity which he could not always control, and, through his mother's family, a dash of mysticism sometimes resembling second sight. His physical and mental powers were not always in the happiest mutual adjustment: he became easily the prey of moods and fancies, and knew the alternations from wild gaiety of spirits to black despair. The firm moral consistency of Puritanism was always his, yet his playful remark about belonging in a hospital for incurable children had a measure of truth in it also.

Both his poetry and his prose reveal a nature never quite integrated into wholeness of structure, into harmony with itself. His writing, at its best, is noble and delightful, full of human charm,

but it is difficult for him to master a certain waywardness and to sustain any note steadily. This temperamental flaw does not affect the winsomeness of his letters, unless to add to it. It is lost to view, often, in the sincerity and pathos of his lyrics, but it is felt in most of his longer efforts in prose, and accounts for a certain dissatisfaction which many grateful and loyal readers nevertheless feel in his criticism. Lowell was more richly endowed by nature and by breadth of reading than Matthew Arnold, for instance, but in the actual performance of the critical function he was surpassed in method by Arnold and perhaps in inerrant perception, in a limited field, by Poe.

It was as a poet, however, that he first won his place in our literature, and it is by means of certain passages in the *Biglow Papers* and the *Commemoration Ode* that he has most moved his countrymen. The effectiveness of *The Present Crisis* and *Sir Launfal*, and of the *Memorial Odes*, particularly the *Ode to Agassiz*, is likewise due to the passion, sweetness, and splendor of certain strophes, rather than to the perfection of these poems as artistic wholes. Lowell's personal lyrics of sorrow, such as *The Changeling*, *The First Snow-Fall*, *After the Burial*, have touched many hearts.

His later lyrics are more subtle, weighted with thought, tinged with autumnal melancholy. He was a most fertile composer, and, like all the men of his time and group, produced too much. Yet his patriotic verse was so admirable in feeling and is still so inspiring to his readers that one cannot wish it less in quantity; and in the field of political satire, such as the two series of *Biglow Papers*, he had a theme and a method precisely suited to his temperament. No American has approached Lowell's success in this difficult *genre*: the swift transitions from rural Yankee humor to splendid scorn of evil and to noblest idealism reveal the full powers of one of our most gifted men. The preacher lurked in this Puritan from first to last, and the war against Mexico and the Civil War stirred him to the depths.

His prose, likewise, is a school of loyalty. There was much of Europe in his learning, as his memorable Dante essay shows, and the traditions of great English literature were the daily companions of his mind. He was bookish, as a bookman should be, and sometimes the very richness and whimsicality of his bookish fancies marred the simplicity and good taste of his pages. But the fundamental texture of his thought and feeling

was American, and his most characteristic style has the raciness of our soil. Nature lovers like to point out the freshness and delicacy of his reaction to the New England scene. Thoreau himself, whom Lowell did not like, was not more veracious an observer than the author of *Sunthin' in the Pastoral Line*, *Cambridge Thirty Years Ago*, and *My Garden Acquaintance*. Yet he watched men as keenly as he did "laylocks" and bobolinks, and no shrewder American essay has been written than his *On a Certain Condescension in Foreigners*. Wit and humor and wisdom made him one of the best talkers of his generation. These qualities pervade his essays and his letters, and the latter in particular reveal those ardors and fidelities of friendship which men like Emerson and Thoreau longed after without ever quite experiencing. Lowell's cosmopolitan reputation, which was greatly enhanced in the last decade of his life, seemed to his old associates of the Saturday Club only a fit recognition of the learning, wit, and fine imagination which had been familiar to them from the first. To hold the old friends throughout his lifetime, and to win fresh ones of a new generation through his books, is perhaps the greatest of Lowell's personal felicities.

While there are no other names in the literature of New England quite comparable with those that have just been discussed, it should be remembered that the immediate effectiveness and popularity of these representative poets and prose writers were dependent upon the existence of an intelligent and responsive reading public. The lectures of Emerson, the speeches of Webster, the stories of Hawthorne, the political verse of Whittier and Lowell, presupposed a keen, reflecting audience, mentally and morally exigent. The spread of the Lyceum system along the line of westward emigration from New England as far as the Mississippi is one tangible evidence of the high level of popular intelligence. That there was much of the superficial and the spread-eagle in the American life of the eighteen-forties is apparent enough without the amusing comments of such English travellers as Dickens, Miss Martineau, and Captain Basil Hall. But there was also genuine intellectual curiosity and a general reading habit which are evidenced not only by a steady growth of newspapers and magazines but also by the demand for substantial books. Biography and history began to be widely read, and it was natural that the most notable productiveness in historical

writing should manifest itself in that section of the country where there were libraries, wealth, leisure for the pursuits of scholarship, a sense of intimate concern with the great issues of the past, and a diffusion of intellectual tastes throughout the community. It was no accident that Sparks and Ticknor, Bancroft and Prescott, Motley and Parkman, were Massachusetts men.

Jared Sparks, it is true, inherited neither wealth nor leisure. He was a furious, unwearied toiler in the field of our national history. Born in 1789, by profession a Unitarian minister, he began collecting the papers of George Washington by 1825. John Marshall, the great jurist, had published his five-volume life of his fellow Virginian a score of years earlier. But Sparks proceeded to write another biography of Washington and to edit his writings. He also edited a *Library of American Biography*, wrote lives of Franklin and Gouverneur Morris, was professor of history and President of Harvard, and lived to be seventy-seven. As editor of the writings of Franklin and Washington, he took what we now consider unpardonable liberties in altering the text, and this error of judgment has somewhat clouded his just reputation as a pioneer in historical research.

George Bancroft, who was born in 1800, and died, a horseback-riding sage, at ninety-one, inherited from his clergyman father a taste for history. He studied in Germany after leaving Harvard, turned schoolmaster, Democratic politician and office-holder, served as Secretary of the Navy, Minister to England and then to the German Empire, and won distinction in each of his avocations, though the real passion of his life was his *History of the United States*, which he succeeded in bringing down to the adoption of the Constitution. The first volume, which appeared in 1834, reads today like a stump speech by a sturdy Democratic orator of the Jacksonian period. But there was solid stuff in it, nevertheless, and as Bancroft proceeded, decade after decade, he discarded some of his rhetoric and philosophy of democracy and utilized increasingly the vast stores of documents which his energy and his high political positions had made it possible for him to obtain. Late in life he condensed his ten great volumes to six. Posterity will doubtless condense these in turn, as posterity has a way of doing, but Bancroft the historian realized his own youthful ambition with a completeness rare in the history of human effort and performed a monumental service to his country.

He was less of an artist, however, than Prescott, the eldest and in some ways the finest figure of the well-known Prescott-Motley-Parkman group of Boston historians. All of these men, together with their friend George Ticknor, who wrote the *History of Spanish Literature* and whose own *Life and Letters* pictures a whole generation, had the professional advantages of inherited wealth, and the opportunity to make deliberate choice of a historical field which offered freshness and picturesqueness of theme. All were tireless workers in spite of every physical handicap; all enjoyed social security and the rich reward of full recognition by their contemporaries. They had their world as in their time, as Chaucer makes the Wife of Bath say of herself, and it was a pleasant world to live in.

Grandson of "Prescott the Brave" of Bunker Hill, and son of the rich Judge Prescott of Salem, William Hickling Prescott was born in 1796, and was graduated from Harvard in 1814. An accident in college destroyed the sight of one eye, and left him but a precarious use of the other. Nevertheless he resolved to emulate Gibbon, whose *Autobiography* had impressed him, and to make himself "an historian in the best sense of the term." He

studied arduously in Europe, with the help of secretaries, and by 1826, after a long hesitation, decided upon a *History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella*. In ten years the three volumes were finished. "Pursuing the work in this quiet, leisurely way, without over-exertion or fatigue," wrote Prescott, "or any sense of obligation to complete it in a given time, I have found it a continual source of pleasure." It was published at his own expense on Christmas Day, 1837, and met with instantaneous success. "My market and my reputation rest principally with England," he wrote in 1838 — a curious footnote, by the way, to Emerson's Phi Beta Kappa Address of the year before. But America joined with England, in praising the new book. Then Prescott turned to the *Conquest of Mexico*, the *Conquest of Peru*, and finally to his unfinished *History of the Reign of Philip II*. He had, as Dean Milman wrote him, "the judgment to choose noble subjects." He wrote with serenity and dignity, with fine balance and proportion. Some of the Spanish documents upon which he relied have been proved less trustworthy than he thought, but this unsuspected defect in his materials scarcely impaired the skill with which this unhasting, unresting

painter filled his great canvases. They need retouching, perhaps, but the younger historians are incompetent for the task. Prescott died in 1859, in the same year as Irving, and he already seems quite as remote from the present hour.

His young friend Motley, of *Dutch Republic* fame, was another Boston Brahmin, born in the year of Prescott's graduation from college. He attended George Bancroft's school, went to Harvard in due course, where he knew Holmes, Sumner, and Wendell Phillips, and at Göttingen became a warm friend of a dog-lover and duelist named Bismarck. Young Motley wrote a couple of unsuccessful novels, dabbled in diplomacy, politics, and review-writing, and finally, encouraged by Prescott, settled down upon Dutch history, went to Europe to work up his material in 1851, and, after five years, scored an immense triumph with his *Rise of the Dutch Republic*. He was a brilliant partisan, hating Spaniards and Calvinists, and wrote all the better for this bias. He was an admirable sketcher of historical portraits, and had Macaulay's skill in composing special chapters devoted to the tendencies and qualities of an epoch or to the characteristics of

a dynasty. Between 1860 and 1868 he produced the four volumes of the *History of the United Netherlands*. During the Civil War he served usefully as American minister to Vienna, and in 1869 was appointed minister to London. Both of these appointments ended unhappily for him. Dr. Holmes, his loyal admirer and biographer, does not conceal the fact that a steadier, less excitable type of public servant might have handled both the Vienna situation and the London situation without incurring a recall. Motley continued to live in England, where his daughters had married, and where, in spite of his ardent Americanism, he felt socially at home. His last book was *The Life and Death of John of Barneveld*. His *Letters*, edited after his death in 1877 by George William Curtis, give a fascinating picture of English life among the cultivated and leisurely classes. The Boston merchant's son was a high-hearted gentleman, and his cosmopolitan experiences used to make his stay-at-home friend, Oliver Wendell Holmes, feel rather dull and provincial in comparison. Both were Sons of Liberty, but Motley had had the luck to find in "brave little Holland" a subject which captivated the interest of Europe and gave the historian international fame. He

had more eloquence than the Doctor, and a far more varied range of prose, but there may be here and there a Yankee guesser about the taste of future generations who will bet on *The Autocrat*, after all.

The character and career of Francis Parkman afford curious material to the student of New England's golden age. In the seventy years of his heroic life, from 1823 to 1893, all the characteristic forces of the age reached their culmination and decline, and his own personality indicates some of the violent reactions produced by the over-strain of Transcendentalism. For here was a descendant of John Cotton, and a clergyman's son, who detested Puritanism and the clergy; who, coming to manhood in the eighteen-forties, hated the very words Transcendentalism, Philosophy, Religion, Reform; an inheritor of property, trained at Harvard, and an Overseer and Fellow of his University, who disliked the ideals of culture and refinement; a member of the Saturday Club who was bored with literary talk and literary people; a staunch American who despised democracy as thoroughly as Alexander Hamilton, and thought suffrage a failure; a nineteenth century historian who cared nothing for philosophy, science,

or the larger lessons of history itself; a fascinating realistic writer who admired Scott, Byron, and Cooper for their tales of action, and despised Wordsworth and Thoreau as effeminate sentiment-alists who were preoccupied with themselves. In Parkman "the wheel has come full circle," and a movement that began with expansion of self ended in hard Spartan repression, even in inhibition of emotion.

Becoming "enamoured of the woods" at sixteen, Parkman chose his life work at eighteen, and he was a man who could say proudly: "I have not yet abandoned any plan which I ever formed." "Before the end of the sophomore year," he wrote in his autobiography, "my various schemes had crystallized into a plan of writing the story of what was then known as the *Old French War*, that is, the war that ended in the conquest of Canada, for here, as it seemed to me, the forest drama was more stirring and the forest stage more thronged with appropriate actors than in any other passage of our history. It was not till some years later that I enlarged the plan to include the whole course of the American conflict between France and England, or, in other words, the history of the American forest: for this

was the light in which I regarded it. My theme fascinated me, and I was haunted with wilderness images day and night." To understand "the history of the American forest" young Parkman devoted his college vacations to long trips in the wilderness, and in 1846, two years after graduation, he made the epoch-making journey described in his first book, *The Oregon Trail*.

The Conspiracy of Pontiac, a highly-colored narrative in two volumes appearing in 1851, marks the first stage of his historical writing. Then came the tragedy of shattered health, and for fourteen years Parkman fought for life and sanity, and produced practically nothing. He had had to struggle from his college days with an obscure disorder of the brain, aggravated by the hardships of his Oregon Trail journey, and by ill-considered efforts to harden his bodily frame by over-exertion. His disease took many forms—insomnia, arthritis, weakness of sight, incapacity for sustained thought. His biographer Farnham says that "he never saw a perfectly well day during his entire literary career." Even when aided by secretaries and copyists, six lines a day was often the limit of his production. His own Stoic words about the limitations of his eyesight are

characteristic: "By reading for one minute, and then resting for an equal time, this alternate process may gradually be continued for about half an hour. Then, after a sufficient interval, it may be repeated, often three or four times in the course of the day. By this means nearly the whole of the volume now offered has been composed." There is no more piteous or inspiring story of a fight against odds in the history of literature.

For after his fortieth year the enemy gave way a little, and book after book somehow got itself written. There they stand upon the shelves, a dozen of them—*The Pioneers of France, The Jesuits in North America, La Salle, The Old Régime, Frontenac, Montcalm and Wolfe, A Half-Century of Conflict*—the boy's dream realized, the man's long warfare accomplished. The history of the forest, as Parkman saw it, was a pageant with the dark wilderness for a background, and, for the actors, taciturn savages, black-robed Jesuits, intrepid explorers, soldiers of France—all struggling for a vast prize, all changing, passing, with a pomp and color unknown to wearied Europe. It was a superb theme, better after all for an American than the themes chosen by Prescott and Tick-

nor and Motley, and precisely adapted to the pictorial and narrative powers of the soldier-minded, soldier-hearted author.

The quality which Parkman admired most in men — though he never seems to have loved men deeply, even his own heroes — was strength of will. That was the secret of his own power, and the sign, it must be added, of the limitations of this group of historians who came at the close of the golden age. Whatever a New England will can accomplish was wrought manfully by such admirable men as Prescott and Parkman. Trained intelligence, deliberate selection of subject, skillful cultivation of appropriate story-telling and picture-painting style, all these were theirs. But the “wild ecstasy” that thrilled the young Emerson as he crossed the bare Common at sunset, the “supernal beauty” of which Poe dreamed in the Fordham cottage, the bay horse and hound and turtle-dove which Thoreau lost long ago and could not find in his hut at Walden, these were something which our later Greeks of the New England Athens esteemed as foolishness.

CHAPTER VIII

POE AND WHITMAN

ENTER now two egotists, who have little in common save their egotism, two outsiders who upset most of the conventional American rules for winning the literary race, two men of genius, in short, about whom we are still quarreling, and whose distinctive quality is more accurately perceived in Europe than it has ever been in the United States.

Both Poe and Whitman were Romanticists by temperament. Both shared in the tradition and influence of European Romanticism. But they were also late comers, and they were caught in the more morbid and extravagant phases of the great European movement while its current was beginning to ebb. Their acquaintance with its literature was mainly at second-hand and through the medium of British and American periodicals. Poe, who was older than Whitman by ten years,

was fifteen when Byron died, in 1824. He was untouched by the nobler mood of Byron, though his verse was colored by the influence of Byron, Moore, and Shelley. His prose models were De Quincey, Disraeli, and Bulwer. Yet he owed more to Coleridge than to any of the Romantics. He was himself a sort of Coleridge without the piety, with the same keen penetrating critical intelligence, the same lovely opium-shadowed dreams, and, alas, with something of the same reputation as a dead-beat.

A child of strolling players, Poe happened to be born in Boston, but he hated "Frog-Pondium"—his favorite name for the city of his nativity—as much as Whistler hated his native town of Lowell. His father died early of tuberculosis, and his mother, after a pitiful struggle with disease and poverty, soon followed her husband to the grave. The boy, by physical inheritance a neurasthenic, though with marked bodily activity in youth, was adopted by the Allans, a kindly family in Richmond, Virginia. Poe liked to think of himself as a Southerner. He was sent to school in England, and in 1826, at seventeen, he attended for nearly a year the newly founded University of Virginia. He was a dark, short, bow-legged boy, with the

face of his own Roderick Usher. He made a good record in French and Latin, read, wrote and recited poetry, tramped on the Ragged Mountains, and did not notably exceed his companions in drinking and gambling. But his Scotch foster-father disapproved of his conduct and withdrew him from the University. A period of wandering followed. He enlisted in the army and was stationed in Boston in 1827, when his first volume, *Tamerlane*, was published. In 1829 he was in Fortress Monroe, and published *Al Aaraf* at Baltimore. He entered West Point in 1830, and was surely, except Whistler, the strangest of all possible cadets. When he was dismissed in 1831, he had written the marvellous lines *To Helen*, *Israfel*, and *The City in the Sea*. That is enough to have in one's knapsack at the age of twenty-two.

In the eighteen years from 1831 to 1849, when Poe's unhappy life came to an end in a Baltimore hospital, his literary activity was chiefly that of a journalist, critic, and short story writer. He lived in Baltimore, Richmond, Philadelphia, and New York. Authors who now exploit their fat bargains with their publishers may have forgotten that letter which Poe wrote back to Philadelphia the morning after he arrived with his child-wife in

New York: "We are both in excellent spirits. . . . We have now got four dollars and a half left. To-morrow I am going to try and borrow three dollars, so that I may have a fortnight to go upon." When the child-wife died in the shabby cottage at Fordham, her wasted body was covered with the old army overcoat which Poe had brought from West Point. If Poe met some of the tests of practical life inadequately, it must be remembered that his health failed at twenty-five, that he was pitiably poor, and that the slightest indulgence in drink set his over-wrought nerves jangling. Ferguson, the former office-boy of the *Literary Messenger*, judged this man of letters with an office-boy's firm and experienced eye: "Mr. Poe was a fine gentleman when he was sober. He was ever kind and courtly, and at such times everyone liked him. But when he was drinking he was about one of the most disagreeable men I have ever met." "I am sorry for him," wrote C. F. Briggs to Lowell. "He has some good points, but taken altogether, he is badly made up." "Badly made up," no doubt, both in body and mind, but all respectable and prosperous Pharisees should be reminded that Poe did not make himself; or rather, that he could not make himself

over. Very few men can. Given Poe's temperament, and the problem is insoluble. He wrote to Lowell in 1844: "I have been too deeply conscious of the mutability and evanescence of temporal things to give any continuous effort to anything — to be consistent in anything. My life has been *whim* — impulse — passion — a longing for solitude — a scorn of all things present in an earnest desire for the future." It is the pathetic confession of a dreamer. Yet this dreamer was also a keen analyzer, a tireless creator of beautiful things. In them he sought and found a refuge from actuality. The marvel of his career is, as I have said elsewhere, that this solitary, embittered craftsman, out of such hopeless material as negations and abstractions, shadows and superstitions, out of disordered fancies and dreams of physical horror and strange crime, should have wrought structures of imperishable beauty.

Let us notice the critical instinct which he brought to the task of creation. His theory of verse is simple, in fact too simple to account for all of the facts. The aim of poetry, according to Poe, is not truth but pleasure — the rhythmical creation of beauty. Poetry should be brief, indefinite, and musical. Its chief instrument is sound.

A certain quaintness or grotesqueness of tone is a means for satisfying the thirst for supernal beauty. Hence the musical lyric is to Poe the only true type of poetry; a long poem does not exist. Readers who respond more readily to auditory than to visual or motor stimulus are therefore Poe's chosen audience. For them he executes, like Paganini, marvels upon his single string. He has easily recognizable devices: the dominant note, the refrain, the "repetend," that is to say the phrase which echoes, with some variation, a phrase or line already used. In such poems as *To Helen*, *Israfel*, *The Haunted Palace*, *Annabel Lee*, the theme, the tone, the melody all weave their magic spell; it is like listening to a lute-player in a dream.

That the device often turns into a trick is equally true. In *The Bells* and *The Raven* we detect the prestidigitator. It is jugglery, though such juggling as only a master-musician can perform. In *Ulalume* and other show-pieces the wires get crossed and the charm snaps, scattering tinsel fragments of nonsense verse. Such are the dangers of the technical temperament unenriched by wide and deep contact with human feeling.

Poe's theory of the art of the short story is

now familiar enough. The power of a tale, he thought, turned chiefly if not solely upon its unity, its harmony of effect. This is illustrated in all of his finest stories. In *The Fall of the House of Usher* the theme is Fear; the opening sentence strikes the key and the closing sentence contains the climax. In the whole composition every sentence is modulated to the one end in view. The autumn landscape tones with the melancholy house; the somber chamber frames the cadaverous face of Roderick Usher; the face is an index of the tumultuous agitation of a mind wrestling with the grim phantom Fear and awaiting the cumulative horror of the final moment. In *Ligeia*, which Poe sometimes thought the best of all his tales, the theme is the ceaseless life of the will, the potency of the spirit of the beloved and departed woman. The unity of effect is absolute, the workmanship consummate. So with the theme of revenge in *The Cask of Amontillado*, the theme of mysterious intrigue in *The Assignment*. In Poe's detective stories, or tales of ratiocination as he preferred to call them, he takes to pieces for our amusement a puzzle which he has cunningly put together. *The Gold Bug* is the best known of these, *The Purloined Letter* the most perfect, *The*

Murders in the Rue Morgue the most sensational. Then there are the tales upon scientific subjects or displaying the pretence of scientific knowledge, where the narrator loves to pose as a man without imagination and with "habits of rigid thought." And there are tales of conscience, of which *The Black Cat* is the most fearful and *William Wilson* the most subtle; and there are landscape sketches and fantasies and extravaganzas, most of these poor stuff.

It is ungrateful and perhaps unnecessary to dwell upon Poe's limitations. His scornful glance caught certain aspects of the human drama with camera-like precision. Other aspects of life, and nobler, he never seemed to perceive. The human comedy sometimes moved him to laughter, but his humor is impish and his wit malign. His imagination fled from the daylight; he dwelt in the twilight among the tombs. He closed his eyes to dream, and could not see the green sunlit earth, seed-time and harvest, man going forth to his toil and returning to his hearthstone, the America that laughs as it labors. He wore upon his finger the magic ring and the genii did his bidding. But we could wish that the palaces they reared for him were not in such a

somber land, with such infernal lights gleaming in their windows, and crowded with such horror-haunted forms. We could wish that his imagination dealt less often with those primitive terrors that belong to the childhood of our race. Yet when his spell is upon us we lapse back by a sort of atavism into primal savagery and shudder with a recrudescence of long forgotten fears. No doubt Poe was ignorant of life, in the highest sense. He was caged in by his ignorance. Yet he had beautiful dusky wings that bruised themselves against his prison.

Poe was a tireless critic of his own work, and both his standards of workmanship and his critical precepts have been of great service to his careless countrymen. He turned out between four and five short stories a year, was poorly paid for them, and indeed found difficulty in selling them at all. Yet he was constantly correcting them for the better. His best poems were likewise his latest. He was tantalized with the desire for artistic perfection. He became the path-breaker for a long file of men in France, Italy, England, and America. He found the way and they brought back the glory and the cash.

I have sometimes imagined Poe, with four other

men and one woman, seated at a dinner-table laid for six, and talking of their art and of themselves. What would the others think of Poe? I fancy that Thackeray would chat with him courteously, but would not greatly care for him. George Eliot, woman-like, would pity him. Hawthorne would watch him with those inscrutable eyes and understand him better than the rest. But Stevenson would be immensely interested; he would begin an essay on Poe before he went to sleep. And Mr. Kipling would look sharply at him: he has seen that man before, in *The Gate of a Hundred Sorrows*. All of them would find in him something to praise, a great deal to marvel at, and perhaps not much to love. And the sensitive, shabby, lonely Poe—what would he think of them? He might not care much for the other guests, but I think he would say to himself with a thrill of pride: “I belong at this table.” And he does.

Walt Whitman, whom his friend O'Connor dubbed the “good gray poet,” offers a bizarre contrast to Edgar Allan Poe. There was nothing distinctively American about Poe except his ingenuity; he had no interest in American history or in American ideas; he was a timeless, placeless embodiment of technical artistry. But Whitman

had a passion for his native soil; he was hypnotized by the word America; he spent much of his mature life in brooding over the question, "What, after all, is an American, and what should an American poet be in our age of science and democracy?" It is true that he was as untypical as Poe of the average citizen of "these states." His personality is unique. In many respects he still baffles our curiosity. He repels many of his countrymen without arousing the pity which adds to their romantic interest in Poe. Whatever our literary students may feel, and whatever foreign critics may assert, it must be acknowledged that to the vast majority of American men and women "good old Walt" is still an outsider.

Let us try to see first the type of mind with which we are dealing. It is fundamentally religious, perceiving the unity and kinship and glory of all created things. It is this passion of worship which inspired St. Francis of Assisi's *Canticle to the Sun*. It cries, "Benedicite, Omnia opera Domini: All ye Green Things upon the Earth, bless ye the Lord!" That is the real motto for Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. Like St. Francis, and like his own immediate master, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Whitman is a mystic. He cannot argue the

ultimate questions; he asserts them. Instead of marshaling and sifting the proofs for immortality, he chants "I know I am deathless." Like Emerson again, Whitman shares that peculiarly American type of mysticism known as Transcendentalism, but he came at the end of this movement instead of at the beginning of it. In his Romanticism, likewise, he is an end of an era figure. His affiliations with Victor Hugo are significant; and a volume of Scott's poems which he owned at the age of sixteen became his "inexhaustible mine and treasury for more than sixty years." Finally, and quite as uncompromisingly as Emerson, Thoreau, and Poe, Whitman is an individualist. He represents the assertive, Jacksonian period of our national existence. In a thousand similes he makes a declaration of independence for the separate person, the "single man" of Emerson's Phi Beta Kappa address. "I wear my hat as I please, indoors and out." Sometimes this is mere swagger. Sometimes it is superb.

So much for the type. Let us turn next to the story of Whitman's life. It must here be told in the briefest fashion, for Whitman's own prose and poetry relate the essentials of his biography. He was born on Long Island, of New England and

Dutch ancestry, in 1819. Lowell, W. W. Story, and Charles A. Dana were born in that year, as was also George Eliot. Whitman's father was a carpenter, who "leaned to the Quakers." There were many children. When little "Walt"—as he was called, to distinguish him from his father, Walter—was four, the family moved to Brooklyn. The boy had scanty schooling, and by the time he was twenty had tried type-setting, teaching, and editing a country newspaper on Long Island. He was a big, dark-haired fellow, sensitive, emotional, extraordinarily impressible.

The next sixteen years were full of happy vagrancy. At twenty-two he was editing a paper in New York, and furnishing short stories to the *Democratic Review*, a literary journal which numbered Bryant, Longfellow, Whittier, Poe, Hawthorne, and Thoreau among its contributors. He wrote a novel on temperance, "mostly in the reading-room of Tammany Hall," and tried here and there an experiment in free verse. He was in love with the pavements of New York and the Brooklyn ferry-boats, in love with Italian opera and with long tramps over Long Island. He left his position on *The Brooklyn Eagle* and wandered south to New Orleans. By and by he drifted back

to New York, tried lecturing, worked at the carpenter's trade with his father, and brooded over a book—"a book of new things."

This was the famous *Leaves of Grass*. He set the type himself, in a Brooklyn printing-office, and printed about eight hundred copies. The book had a portrait of the author—a meditative, gray-bearded poet in workman's clothes—and a confused preface on America as a field for the true poet. Then followed the new gospel, "I celebrate myself," chanted in long lines of free verse, whose patterns perplexed contemporary readers. For the most part it was passionate speech rather than song, a rhapsodical declamation in hybrid rhythms. Very few people bought the book or pretended to understand what it was all about. Some were startled by the frank sexuality of certain poems. But Emerson wrote to Whitman from Concord: "I find it the most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom that America has yet contributed."

Until the Civil War was half over, Whitman remained in Brooklyn, patiently composing new poems for successive printings of his book. Then he went to the front to care for a wounded brother, and finally settled down in a Washington garret

to spend his strength as an army hospital nurse. He wrote *Drum Taps* and other magnificent poems about the War, culminating in his threnody on Lincoln's death, *When Lilacs last in the Door-yard Bloomed*. Swinburne called this "the most sonorous nocturn ever chanted in the church of the world." After the war had ended, Whitman stayed on in Washington as a government clerk, and saw much of John Burroughs and W. D. O'Connor. John Hay was a staunch friend. Some of the best known poets and critics of England and the Continent now began to recognize his genius. But his health had been permanently shattered by his heroic service as a nurse, and in 1873 he suffered a paralytic stroke which forced him to resign his position in Washington and remove to his brother's home in Camden, New Jersey.

He was only fifty-four, but his best work was already done, and his remaining years, until his death in 1892, were those of patient and serene invalidism. He wrote some fascinating prose in this final period, and his cluttered chamber in Camden became the shrine of many a literary pilgrim, among them some of the foremost men of letters of this country and of Europe. He was

cared for by loyal friends. Occasionally he appeared in public, a magnificent gray figure of a man. And then, at seventy-three, the "Dark mother always gliding near" enfolded him.

There are puzzling things in the physical and moral constitution of Walt Whitman, and the obstinate questions involved in his theory of poetry and in his actual poetical performance are still far from solution. But a few points concerning him are by this time fairly clear. They must be swiftly summarized.

The first obstacle to the popular acceptance of Walt Whitman is the formlessness or alleged formlessness of *Leaves of Grass*. This is a highly technical question, involving a more accurate notation than has thus far been made of the patterns and tunes of free verse and of emotional prose. Whitman's "new and national declamatory expression," as he termed it, cannot receive a final technical valuation until we have made more scientific progress in the analysis of rhythms. As regards the contents of his verse, it is plain that he included much material unfused and untransformed by emotion. These elements foreign to the nature of poetry clog many of his lines. The enumerated objects in his catalogue or inventory

poems often remain inert objects only. Like many mystics, he was hypnotized by external phenomena, and he often fails to communicate to his reader the trance-like emotion which he himself experienced. This imperfect transfusion of his material is a far more significant defect in Whitman's poetry than the relatively few passages of unashamed sexuality which shocked the American public in 1855.

The gospel or burden of *Leaves of Grass* is no more difficult of comprehension than the general drift of Emerson's essays, which helped to inspire it. The starting-point of the book is a mystical illumination regarding the unity and blessedness of the universe, an insight passing understanding, but based upon the revelatory experience of love. In the light of this experience, all created things are recognized as divine. The starting-point and center of the Whitman world is the individual man, the "strong person," imperturbable in mind, athletic in body, unconquerable, and immortal. Such individuals meet in comradeship, and pass together along the open roads of the world. No one is excluded because of his poverty or his sins; there is room in the ideal America for everybody except the doubter and sceptic. Whitman does

not linger over the smaller groups of human society, like the family. He is not a fireside poet. He passes directly from his strong persons, meeting freely on the open road, to his conception of "these States." One of his typical visions of the breadth and depth and height of America will be found in *By Blue Ontario's Shore*. In this and in many similar rhapsodies Whitman holds obstinately to what may be termed the three points of his national creed. The first is the newness of America, and its expression is in his well-known chant of *Pioneers, O Pioneers*. Yet this new America is subtly related to the past; and in Whitman's later poems, such as *Passage to India*, the spiritual kinship of orient and occident is emphasized. The second article of the creed is the unity of America. Here he voices the conceptions of Hamilton, Clay, Webster, and Lincoln. In spite of all diversity in external aspects the republic is "one and indivisible." This unity, in Whitman's view, was cemented forever by the issue of the Civil War. Lincoln, the "Captain," dies indeed on the deck of the "victor ship," but the ship comes into the harbor "with object won." Third and finally, Whitman insists upon the solidarity of America with all countries of the globe. Particularly in his

yearning and thoughtful old age, the poet perceived that humanity has but one heart and that it should have but one will. No American poet has ever prophesied so directly and powerfully concerning the final issue involved in that World War which he did not live to see.

Whitman, like Poe, had defects of character and defects of art. His life and work raise many problems which will long continue to fascinate and to baffle the critics. But after all of them have had their say, it will remain true that he was a seer and a prophet, far in advance of his own time, like Lincoln, and like Lincoln, an inspired interpreter of the soul of this republic.

CHAPTER IX

UNION AND LIBERTY

“THERE is what I call the American idea,” declared Theodore Parker in the Anti-Slavery Convention of 1850. “This idea demands, as the proximate organization thereof, a democracy—that is, a government of all the people, by all the people, for all the people; of course, a government on the principle of eternal justice, the unchanging law of God; for shortness’ sake, I will call it the idea of Freedom.”

These are noble words, and they are thought to have suggested a familiar phrase of Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address, thirteen years later. Yet students of literature, no less than students of politics, recognize the difficulty of summarizing in words a national “idea.” Precisely what was the Greek “idea”? What is today the French “idea”? No single formula is adequate to express such a complex of fact, theories, moods—not even

the famous "Liberty, Fraternity, Equality." The existence of a truly national life and literature presupposes a certain degree of unity, an integration of race, language, political institutions, and social ideals. It is obvious that this problem of national integration meets peculiar obstacles in the United States. Divergencies of race, tradition, and social theory, and clashing interests of different sections have been felt from the beginning of the nation's life. There was well-nigh complete solidarity in the single province of New England during a portion of the seventeenth century and under the leadership of the great Virginians there was sufficient national fusion to make the Revolution successful. But early in the nineteenth century, the opening of the new West, and the increasing economic importance of Slavery as a peculiar institution of the South, provoked again the ominous question of the possibility of an enduring Union. From 1820 until the end of the Civil War, it was the chief political issue of the United States. The aim of the present chapter is to show how the theme of Union and Liberty affected our literature.

To appreciate the significance of this theme we must remind ourselves again of what many per-

sons have called the civic note in our national writing. Franklin exemplified it in his day. It is far removed from the pure literary art of a Poe, a Hawthorne, a Henry James. It aims at action rather than beauty. It seeks to persuade, to convince, to bring things to pass. We shall observe it in the oratory of Clay and Webster, as they pleaded for compromise; in the editorials of Garrison, a foe to compromise and like Calhoun an advocate, if necessary, of disunion; in the epoch-making novel of Harriet Beecher Stowe; in the speeches of Wendell Phillips, in verse white-hot with political passion, and sermons blazing with the fury of attack and defense of principles dear to the human heart. We must glance, at least, at the lyrics produced by the war itself, and finally, we shall observe how Abraham Lincoln, the inheritor of the ideas of Jefferson, Clay, and Webster, perceives and maintains, in the noblest tones of our civic speech, the sole conditions of our continuance as a nation.

Let us begin with oratory, an American habit, and, as many besides Dickens have thought, an American defect. We cannot argue that question adequately here. It is sufficient to say that in the pioneer stages of our existence oratory was neces-

sary as a stimulus to communal thought and feeling. The speeches of Patrick Henry and Samuel Adams were as essential to our winning independence as the sessions of statesmen and the armed conflicts in the field. And in that new West which came so swiftly and dramatically into existence at the close of the Revolution, the orator came to be regarded as the normal type of intellectual leadership. The stump grew more potent than school-house and church and bench.

The very pattern, and, if one likes, the tragic victim of this glorification of oratory was Henry Clay, "Harry of the West," the glamour of whose name and the wonderful tones of whose voice became for a while a part of the political system of the United States. Union and Liberty were the master-passions of Clay's life, but the greater of these was Union. The half-educated young immigrant from Virginia hazarded his career at the outset by championing Anti-Slavery in the Kentucky Constitutional Convention; the last notable act of his life was his successful management, at the age of seventy-three, of the futile Compromise of 1850. All his life long he fought for national issues; for the War of 1812, for a protective tariff and an "American system," for the Missouri

Compromise of 1820 as a measure for national safety; and he had plead generously for the young South American republics and for struggling Greece. He had become the perpetual candidate of his party for the Presidency, and had gone down again and again in unforeseen and heart-rending defeat. Yet he could say honorably: "If any one desires to know the leading and paramount object of my public life, the preservation of this union will furnish him the key." One could wish that the speeches of this fascinating American were more readable today. They seem thin, facile, full of phrases — such adroit phrases as would catch the ear of a listening, applauding audience. Straight, hard thinking was not the road to political preferment in Clay's day. Calhoun had that power, as Lincoln had it. Webster had the capacity for it, although he was too indolent to employ his great gifts steadily. Yet it was Webster who analyzed kindly and a little sadly, for he was talking during Clay's last illness and just before his own, his old rival's defect in literary quality: "He was never a man of books. . . . I could never imagine him sitting comfortably in his library and reading quietly out of the great books of the past. He has been too fond of excitement — he has lived upon it;

he has been too fond of company, not enough alone; and has had few resources within himself." Were the limitations of a typical oratorical temperament ever touched more unerringly than in these words?

When Webster himself thundered, at the close of his reply to Hayne in 1830, "Union *and* Liberty, now and forever, one and inseparable," the words sank deeper into the consciousness of the American people than any similar sentiment uttered by Henry Clay. For Webster's was the richer, fuller nature, nurtured by "the great books of the past," brooding, as Lincoln was to brood later, over the seemingly insoluble problem of preserving a union of States half slave, half free. On the fateful seventh of March, 1850, Webster, like Clay, cast the immense weight of his personality and prestige upon the side of compromise. It was the ruin of his political fortune, for the mood of the North was changing, and the South preferred other candidates for the Presidency. Yet the worst that can fairly be said against that speech today is that it lacked moral imagination to visualize, as Mrs. Stowe was soon to visualize, the human results of slavery. As a plea for the transcendent necessity of maintaining the old Union it was consistent

with Webster's whole development of political thought.

What were the secrets of that power that held Webster's hearers literally spellbound, and made the North think of him, after that alienation of 1850, as a fallen angel? No one can say fully, for we touch here the mysteries of personality and of the spoken word. But enough survives from the Webster legend, from his correspondence and political and legal oratory, to bring us into the presence of a superman. The dark Titan face, painted by such masters as Carlyle, Hawthorne, and Emerson; the magical voice, remembered now but by a few old men; the bodily presence, with its leonine suggestion of sleepy power only half put forth—these aided Webster to awe men or allure them into personal idolatry. Yet outside of New England he was admired rather than loved. There is still universal recognition of the mental capacity of this foremost lawyer and foremost statesman of his time. He was unsurpassed in his skill for direct, simple, limpid statement; but he could rise at will to a high Roman stateliness of diction, a splendid sonorousness of cadence. His greatest public appearances were in the Dartmouth College Case before the Supreme Court, the Plymouth,

Bunker Hill, and Adams-Jefferson commemorative orations, the Reply to Hayne, and the Seventh of March speeches in the Senate. Though he exhibited in his private life something of the prodigal recklessness of the pioneer, his mental operations were conservative, constructive. His lifelong antagonist Calhoun declared that "The United States are not a nation." Webster, in opposition to this theory of a confederation of states, devoted his superb talents to the demonstration of the thesis that the United States "*is,*" not "*are.*" Thus he came to be known as the typical expounder of the Constitution. When he reached, in 1850, the turning-point of his career, his countrymen knew by heart his personal and political history, the New Hampshire boyhood and education, the rise to mastery at the New England bar, the service in the House of Representatives and the Senate and as Secretary of State. His speeches were already in the schoolbooks, and for twenty years boys had been declaiming his arguments against nullification. He had helped to teach America to think and to feel. Indeed it was through his oratory that many of his fellow-citizens had gained their highest conception of the beauty, the potency, and the dignity of human

speech. And in truth he never exhibited his logical power and demonstrative skill more superbly than in the plea of the seventh of March for the preservation of the *status quo*, for the avoidance of mutual recrimination between North and South, for obedience to the law of the land. It was his supreme effort to reconcile an irreconcilable situation.

It failed, as we know. Whittier, Emerson, Theodore Parker, and indeed most of the voters of New England, believed that Webster had bartered his private convictions in the hope of securing the Presidential nomination in 1852. They assailed him savagely, and Webster died, a broken man, in the autumn of the Presidential year. "I have given my life to law and politics," he wrote to Professor Silliman. "Law is uncertain and politics are utterly vain." The dispassionate judgment of the present hour frees him from the charge of conscious treachery to principle. He was rather a martyr to his own conception of the obligations imposed by nationality. When these obligations run counter to human realities, the theories of statesmen must give way. Emerson could not refute that logic of Webster's argument for the Fugitive Slave Law, but he could at least record

in his private *Journal*: "*I will not obey it, by God!*" So said hundreds of thousands of obscure men in the North, but Webster did not or could not hear them.

While no other orator of that period was so richly endowed as Daniel Webster, the struggle for Union and Liberty enlisted on both sides many eloquent men. John C. Calhoun's acute, ingenious, masterly political theorizing can still be studied in speeches that have lost little of their effectiveness through the lapse of time. The years have dealt roughly with Edward Everett, once thought to be the pattern of oratorical gifts and graces. In commemorative oratory, indeed, he ranked with Webster, but the dust is settling upon his learned and ornate pages. Rufus Choate, another conservative Whig in politics, and a leader, like Wirt and Pinkney, at the bar, had an exotic, almost Oriental fancy, a gorgeousness of diction, and an intensity of emotion unrivaled among his contemporaries. His Dartmouth College eulogy of Webster in 1853 shows him at his best. The Anti-Slavery orators, on the other hand, had the advantage of a specific moral issue in which they led the attack. Wendell Phillips was the most polished, the most consummate in his air of informal.

ity, and his example did much to puncture the American tradition of high-flown oratory. He was an expert in virulent denunciation, passionately unfair beneath his mask of conversational decorum, an aristocratic demagogue. He is still distrusted and hated by the Brahmin class of his own city, still adored by the children and grandchildren of slaves. Charles Sumner, like Edward Everett, seems sinking into popular oblivion, in spite of the statues and portraits and massive volumes of erudite and caustic and high-minded orations. He may be seen at his best in such books as Longfellow's *Journal and Correspondence* and the *Life and Letters* of George Ticknor. There one has a pleasant picture of a booklover, traveler, and friend. But in his public speech he was arrogant, unsympathetic, domineering. "Sumner is my idea of a bishop," said Lincoln tentatively. There are bishops and bishops, however, and if Henry Ward Beecher, whom Lincoln and hosts of other Americans admired, had only belonged to the Church of England, what an admirable Victorian bishop he might have made! Perhaps his best service to the cause of union was rendered by his speeches in England, where he fairly mobbed the mob and won them by his wit, courage, and by

his appeal to the instinct of fair play. Beecher's oratory, in and out of the pulpit, was temperamental, sentimental in the better sense, and admirably human in all its instincts. He had an immense following, not only in political and humanitarian fields, but as a lovable type of the everyday American who can say undisputed things not only solemnly, if need be, but by preference with an infectious smile. The people who loved Mr. Beecher are the people who understand Mr. Bryan.

Foremost among the journalists of the great debate were William Lloyd Garrison and Horace Greeley. Garrison was a perfect example of the successful journalist as described by Zola—the man who keeps on pounding at a single idea until he has driven it into the head of the public. Everyone knows at least the sentence from his salutatory editorial in *The Liberator* on January 1, 1831: "I am in earnest—I will not retreat a single inch—*And I will be heard.*" He kept this vow, and he also kept the accompanying and highly characteristic promise: "I will be as harsh as truth and as uncompromising as justice. On this subject, I do not wish to think, or write, or speak, with moderation." But there would be little political litera-

ture in the world if its production were entrusted to the moderate type of man, and the files of *The Liberator*, though certainly harsh and full of all uncharitableness towards slave-owners, make excellent reading for the twentieth century American who perceives that in spite of the triumph of emancipation, in which Garrison had his fair share of glory, many aspects of our race-problem remain unsolved. Horace Greeley, the founder and editor of the *New York Tribune*, was a farmer's boy who learned early to speak and write the vocabulary of the plain people. Always interested in new ideas, even in Transcendentalism and Fourierism, his courage and energy and journalistic vigor gave him leadership in the later phases of the movement for enfranchisement. He did not hesitate to offer unasked advice to Lincoln on many occasions, and Lincoln enriched our literature by his replies. Greeley had his share of faults and fatuities, but in his best days he had an impressively loyal following among both rural and city-bred readers of his paper, and he remains one of the best examples of that obsolescent personal journalism which is destined to disappear under modern conditions of newspaper production. Readers really used to care for "what Greeley said" and

"Dana said" and "Sam Bowles said," and all of these men, with scores of others, have left their stamp upon the phrases and the tone of our political writing.

In the concrete issue of Slavery, however, it must be admitted that the most remarkable literary victory was scored, not by any orator or journalist, but by an almost unknown little woman, the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. No American novel has had so curious a history and so great or so immediate an influence in this country and in Europe. In spite of all that has been written about it, its author's purpose is still widely misunderstood, particularly in the South, and the controversy over this one epoch-making novel has tended to obscure the literary reputation which Mrs. Stowe won by her other books.

Harriet Beecher, the daughter and the sister of famous clergymen, was born in Litchfield, Connecticut, in 1811. For seventeen years, from 1832 to 1849, she lived in the border city of Cincinnati, within sight of slave territory, and in daily contact with victims of the slave system. While her sympathies, like those of her father Lyman Beecher, were anti-slavery, she was not an Abolitionist in the Garrisonian sense of that word. At twenty-

five she had married a widowed professor, Calvin Stowe, to whom she bore many children. She had written a few sketches of New England life, and her family thought her a woman of genius. Such was the situation in the winter of 1849-1850, when the Stowes migrated to Brunswick, Maine, where the husband had been appointed to a chair at Bowdoin. Pitiably poor, and distracted by household cares which she had to face single-handed—for the Professor was a “feckless body”—Mrs. Stowe nevertheless could not be indifferent to the national crisis over the Fugitive Slave Law. She had seen its working. When her sister-in-law wrote to her: “If I could use a pen as you can, I would write something that would make this whole nation feel what an accursed thing slavery is,” Mrs. Stowe exclaimed: “God helping me, I will write something; I will if I live.”

Uncle Tom's Cabin, begun in the spring of 1850, was a woman's answer to Webster's seventh of March speech. Its object was plainly stated to be “to awaken sympathy and feeling for the African race; to show their wrongs and sorrows, under a system so necessarily cruel and unjust as to defeat and do away the good effects of all that can be attempted for them, by their best friends under

it." The book was permeated with what we now call the 1848 anti-aristocratic sentiment, the direct heritage of the French Revolution. "There is a *dies iræ* coming on, sooner or later," admits St. Clare in the story. "The same thing is working, in Europe, in England, and in this country." There was no sectional hostility in Mrs. Stowe's heart. "The people of the free states have defended, encouraged, and participated [in slavery]; and are more guilty for it, before God, than the South, in that they have *not* the apology of education or custom. If the mothers of the free states had all felt as they should in times past, the sons of the free states would not have been the holders, and proverbially the hardest masters, of slaves; the sons of the free states would not have connived at the extension of slavery in our national body." "Your book is going to be the great pacificator," wrote a friend of Mrs. Stowe; "it will unite North and South." But the distinctly Christian and fraternal intention of the book was swiftly forgotten in the storm of controversy that followed its appearance. It had been written hastily, fervidly, in the intervals of domestic toil at Brunswick, had been printed as a serial in *The National Era* without attracting much attention, and was

issued in book form in March, 1852. Its sudden and amazing success was not confined to this country. The story ran in three Paris newspapers at once, was promptly dramatized, and has held the stage in France ever since. It was placed upon the *Index* in Italy, as being subversive of established authority. Millions of copies were sold in Europe, and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, more than any other cause, held the English working men in sympathy with the North in the English cotton crisis of our Civil War.

It is easy to see the faults of this masterpiece and impossible not to recognize its excellencies. "If our art has not scope enough to include a book of this kind," said Madame George Sand, "we had better stretch the terms of our art a little." For the book proved to be, as its author had hoped, a "living dramatic reality." Topsy, Chloe, Sam and Andy, Miss Ophelia and Legree are alive. Mrs. St. Clare might have been one of Balzac's indolent, sensuous women. Uncle Tom himself is a bit too good to be true, and readers no longer weep over the death of little Eva — nor, for that matter, over the death of Dickens's little Nell. There is some melodrama, some religiosity, and there are some absurd recognition scenes at the

close. Nevertheless with an instinctive genius which Zola would have envied, Mrs. Stowe embodies in men and women the vast and ominous system of slavery. All the tragic forces of necessity, blindness, sacrifice, and retribution are here: neither Shelby, nor Eliza, nor the tall Kentuckian who aids her, nor John Bird, nor Uncle Tom himself in the final act of his drama, can help himself. For good or evil they are the products and results of the system; and yet they have and they give the illusion of volition.

Mrs. Stowe lived to write many another novel and short story, among them *Dred*, *The Minister's Wooing*, *Oldtown Folks*, *Oldtown Fireside Stories*. In the local short story she deserves the honors due to one of the pioneers, and her keen affectionate observation, her humor, and her humanity, would have given her a literary reputation quite independent of her masterpiece. But she is likely to pay the penalty of that astounding success, and to go down to posterity as the author of a single book. She would not mind this fate.

The poetry of the idea of Freedom and of the sectional struggle which was necessary before that idea could be realized in national policy is on the whole not commensurate with the significance of

the issue itself. Any collection of American political verse produced during this period exhibits spirited and sincere writing, but the combination of mature literary art and impressive general ideas is comparatively rare. There are single poems of Whittier, Lowell, and Whitman which meet every test of effective political and social verse, but the main body of poetry, both sectional and national, written during the thirty years ending with 1865 lacks breadth, power, imaginative daring. The continental spaciousness and energy which foreign critics thought they discovered in Whitman is not characteristic of our poetry as a whole. Victor Hugo and Shelley and Swinburne have written far more magnificent republican poetry than ours. The passion for freedom has been very real upon this side of the Atlantic; it pulsed in the local loyalty of the men who sang *Dixie* as well as in their antagonists who chanted *John Brown's Body* and *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*; but this passion has not yet lifted and ennobled any notable mass of American verse. Even the sentiment of union was more adequately voiced in editorials and sermons and orations, even in a short story — Edward Everett Hale's *Man Without a Country* — than by most of the poets who attempted to glorify that theme.

Nevertheless the verse of these thirty years is rich in provincial and sectional loyalties. It has earnestness and pathos. We have, indeed, no adequate national anthem, even yet, for neither the words nor the music of *The Star-Spangled Banner* fully express what we feel while we are trying to sing it, as the *Marseillaise*, for example, does express the very spirit of revolutionary republicanism. But in true pioneer fashion we get along with a makeshift until something better turns up. The lyric and narrative verse of the Civil War itself was great in quantity, and not more inferior in quality than the war verse of other nations has often proved to be when read after the immediate occasion for it has passed. Single lyrics by Timrod and Paul Hayne, Boker, H. H. Brownell, Read, Stedman, and other men are still full of fire. Yet Mrs. Howe's *Battle Hymn*, scribbled hastily in the gray dawn, interpreted, as no other lyric of the war quite succeeded in interpreting, the mystical glory of sacrifice for Freedom. Soldiers sang it in camp; women read it with tears; children repeated it in school, vaguely but truly perceiving in it, as their fathers had perceived in Webster's *Reply to Hayne* thirty years before, the idea of union made "simple, sensuous, passionate." No American

poem has had a more dramatic and intense life in the quick breathing imagination of men.

More and more, however, the instinct of our people is turning to the words of Abraham Lincoln as the truest embodiment in language, as his life was the truest embodiment in action, of our national ideal. It is a curious reversal of contemporary judgments that thus discovers in the homely phrases of a frontier lawyer the most perfect literary expression of the deeper spirit of his time. "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" asked the critical East. The answer is that he had learned in a better school than the East afforded. The story of Lincoln's life is happily too familiar to need retelling here, but some of the elements in his growth in the mastery of speech may at least be summarized.

Lincoln had a slow, tireless mind, capable of intense concentration. It was characteristic of him that he rarely took notes when trying a law case, saying that the notes distracted his attention. When his partner Herndon was asked when Lincoln had found time to study out the constitutional history of the United States, Herndon expressed the opinion that it was when Lincoln was lying on his back on the office sofa, apparently

watching the flies upon the ceiling. This combination of bodily repose with intense mental and spiritual activity is familiar to those who have studied the biography of some of the great mystics. Walter Pater pointed it out in the case of Wordsworth.

In recalling the poverty and restriction of Lincoln's boyhood and his infrequent contact with schoolhouses, it is well to remember that he managed nevertheless to read every book within twenty miles of him. These were not many, it is true, but they included *The Bible*, *Æsop's Fables*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Robinson Crusoe*, and, a little later, Burns and Shakespeare. Better food than this for the mind of a boy has never been found. Then he came to the history of his own country since the Declaration of Independence and mastered it. "I am tolerably well acquainted with the history of the country," he remarked in his Chicago speech of 1858; and in the Cooper Union speech of 1860 he exhibited a familiarity with the theory and history of the Constitution which amazed the young lawyers who prepared an annotated edition of the address. "He has wit, facts, dates," said Douglas, in extenuation of his own disinclination to enter upon the famous joint debates, and, when Douglas

returned to Washington after the debates were over, he confessed to the young Henry Watterson that "he is the greatest debater I have ever met, either here or anywhere else." Douglas had won the senatorship and could afford to be generous, but he knew well enough that his opponent's facts and dates had been unanswerable. Lincoln's mental grip, indeed, was the grip of a born wrestler. "I've got him," he had exclaimed toward the end of the first debate, and the Protean Little Giant, as Douglas was called, had turned and twisted in vain, caught by "that long-armed creature from Illinois." He could indeed win the election of 1858, but he had been forced into an interpretation of the Dred Scott decision which cost him the Presidency in 1860.

Lincoln's keen interest in words and definitions, his patience in searching the dictionary, is known to every student of his life. Part of his singular discrimination in the use of language is due to his legal training, but his style was never professionalized. Neither did it have anything of that frontier glibness and banality which was the curse of popular oratory in the West and South. Words were weapons in the hands of this self-taught fighter for ideas: he kept their edges sharp, and

could if necessary use them with deadly accuracy. He framed the "Freeport dilemma" for the unwary feet of Douglas as cunningly as a fox-hunter lays his trap. "Gentlemen," he had said of an earlier effort, "Judge Douglas informed you that this speech of mine was probably carefully prepared. *I admit that it was.*"

The story, too, was a weapon of attack and defense for this master fabulist. Sometimes it was a readier mode of argument than any syllogism; sometimes it gave him, like the traditional diplomatist's pinch of snuff, an excuse for pausing while he studied his adversary or made up his own mind; sometimes, with the instinct of a poetic soul, he invented a parable and gravely gave it a historic setting "over in Sangamon County." For although upon his intellectual side the man was a subtle and severe logician, on his emotional side he was a lover of the concrete and human. He was always, like John Bunyan, dreaming and seeing "a man" who symbolized something apposite to the occasion. Thus even his invented stories aided his marvelous capacity for statement, for specific illustration of a general law. Lincoln's destiny was to be that of an explainer, at first to a local audience in store or tavern or courtroom,

then to upturned serious faces of Illinois farmers who wished to hear national issues made clear to them, then to a listening nation in the agony of civil war, and ultimately to a world which looks to Lincoln as an exponent and interpreter of the essence of democracy.

As the audience increased, the style took on beauty and breadth, as if the man's soul were looking through wider and wider windows at the world. But it always remained the simplest of styles. In an offhand reply to a serenade by an Indiana regiment, or in answering a visiting deputation of clergymen at the White House, Lincoln could summarize and clarify a complicated national situation with an ease and orderliness and fascination that are the despair of professional historians. He never wasted a word. "Go to work is the only cure for your case," he wrote to John D. Johnston. There are ten words in that sentence and none of over four letters. The *Gettysburg Address* contains but two hundred and seventy words, in ten sentences. "It is a flat failure," said Lincoln despondently; but Edward Everett, who had delivered "the" oration of that day, wrote to the President: "I should be glad if I could flatter myself that I came as near to the central idea of

the occasion in two hours as you did in two minutes." Today the *Address* reads as if Lincoln knew that it would ultimately be stamped in bronze.

Yet the real test of Lincoln's supremacy in our distinctly civic literature lies not so much in his skill in the manipulation of language, consummate as that was, but rather in those large elements of his nature which enabled him to perceive the true quality and ideal of American citizenship and its significance to the world. There was melancholy in that nature, else there had been a less rich humor; there was mysticism and a sense of religion which steadily deepened as his responsibilities increased. There was friendliness, magnanimity, pity for the sorrowful, patience for the slow of brain and heart, and an expectation for the future of humanity which may best be described in the old phrase "waiting for the Kingdom of God." His recurrent dream of the ship coming into port under full sail, which preluded many important events in his own life—he had it the night before he was assassinated—is significant not only of that triumph of a free nation which he helped to make possible, but also of the victory of what he loved to call "the whole family of man."

"That is the real issue," he had declared in closing the debates with Douglas; "that is the issue that will continue in this country when these poor tongues of Judge Douglas and myself shall be silent. It is the eternal struggle between these two principles—right and wrong—throughout the world. They are the two principles that have stood face to face from the beginning of time; and will ever continue to struggle. The one is the common right of humanity, and the other the divine right of kings."

For this representative Anglo-Saxon man, developed under purely American conditions, maturing slowly, keeping close to facts, dying, like the old English saint, while he was "still learning," had none of the typical hardness and selfishness of the Anglo-Saxon. A brooder and idealist, he was one of those "prophetic souls of the wide world dreaming on things to come," with sympathies and imagination that reached out beyond the immediate urgencies of his race and nation to comprehend the universal task and discipline of the sons of men. In true fraternity and democracy this Westerner was not only far in advance of his own day, but he is also far in advance of ours which raises statues to his memory. Yet he was used

to loneliness and to the long view, and even across the welter of the World War of the twentieth century Lincoln would be tall enough to see that ship coming into the harbor under full sail

CHAPTER X

A NEW NATION

THE changes that have come over the inner spirit and the outward expression of American life since Lincoln's day are enough to startle the curiosity of the dullest observer. Yet they have been accomplished within the lifetime of a single man of letters. The author of one of the many campaign biographies of Lincoln in 1860 was William Dean Howells, then an Ohio journalist of twenty-three. In 1917, at the age of eighty, Mr. Howells is still adding to his long row of charming and memorable books. Every phase of American writing since the middle of the last century has fallen under the keen and kindly scrutiny of this loyal follower of the art of literature. As producer, editor, critic, and friend of the foremost writers of his epoch, Mr. Howells has known the books of our new national era as no one else could have known them. Some future historian of the period may

piece together, from no other sources than Mr. Howells's writings, an unrivaled picture of our book-making during more than sixty years. All that the present historian can attempt is to sketch with bungling fingers a few men and a few tendencies which seem to characterize the age.

One result of the Civil War was picturesquely set forth in Emerson's *Journal*. The War had unrolled a map of the Union, he said, and hung it in every man's house. There was a universal shifting of attention, if not always from the province or section to the image of the nation itself, at least a shift of focus from one section to another. The clash of arms had meant many other things besides the triumph of Union and the freedom of the slaves. It had brought men from every state into rude jostling contact with one another and had developed a new social and human curiosity. It may serve as another illustration of Professor Shaler's law of tension and release. The one overshadowing issue which had absorbed so much thought and imagination and energy had suddenly disappeared. Other shadows were to gather, of course. Reconstruction of the South was one of them, and the vast economic and industrial changes that followed the opening of the New West were to

bring fresh problems almost as intricate as the question of slavery had been. But for the moment no one thought of these things. The South accepted defeat as superbly as she had fought, and began to plough once more. The jubilant North went back to work—to build transcontinental railroads, to organize great industries, and to create new states.

The significant American literature of the first decade after the close of the War is not in the books dealing directly with themes involved in the War itself. It is rather the literature of this new release of energy, the new curiosity as to hitherto unknown sections, the new humor and romance. Fred Lewis Pattee, the author of an admirable *History of American Literature since 1870*, uses scarcely too strong a phrase when he entitles this period "The Second Discovery of America"; and he quotes effectively from Mark Twain, who was himself one of these discoverers: "The eight years in America from 1860 to 1868 uprooted institutions that were centuries old, changed the politics of a people, transformed the social life of half the country, and wrought so profoundly upon the entire national character that the influence cannot be measured short of two or three generations."

Let us begin with the West, and with that joyous stage-coach journey of young Samuel L. Clemens across the plains to Nevada in 1861, which he describes in *Roughing It*. Who was this Argonaut of the new era, and what makes him representative of his countrymen in the epoch of release? Born in Missouri in 1835, the son of an impractical emigrant from Virginia, the youth had lived from his fourth until his eighteenth year on the banks of the Mississippi. He had learned the printer's trade, had wandered east and back again, had served for four years as a river-pilot on the Mississippi, and had tried to enter the Confederate army. Then came the six crowded years, chiefly as newspaper reporter, in the boom times of Nevada and California. His fame began with the publication in New York in 1867 of *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*. A newspaper now sent him to Europe to record "what he sees with his own eyes." He did so in *Innocents Abroad*, and his countrymen shouted with laughter. This, then, was "Europe" after all—another "fake" until this shrewd river-pilot who signed himself "Mark Twain" took its soundings! Then came a series of far greater books—*Roughing It*, *Life on the Mississippi*, *The Gilded Age* (in colla-

boration), and *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn* — books that make our American *Odyssey*, rich in the spirit of romance and revealing the magic of the great river as no other pages can ever do again. Gradually Mark Twain became a public character; he retrieved on the lecture platform the loss of a fortune earned by his books; he enjoyed his honorary D. Litt. from Oxford University. Every reader of American periodicals came to recognize the photographs of that thick shock of hair, those heavy eyebrows, the gallant drooping little figure, the striking clothes, the inevitable cigar: all these things seemed to go with the part of professional humorist, to be like the caressing drawl of Mark's voice. The force of advertisement could no further go. But at bottom he was far other than a mere maker of boisterous jokes for people with frontier preferences in humor. He was a passionate, chivalric lover of things fair and good, although too honest to pretend to see beauty and goodness where he could not personally detect them — and an equally passionate hater of evil. Read *The Man Who Corrupted Hadleyburg* and *The Mysterious Stranger*. In his last years, torn by private sorrows, he turned as black a philosophical pessimist as we have bred. He died at

his new country seat in Connecticut in 1910. Mr. Paine has written his life in three great volumes, and there is a twenty-five volume edition of his *Works*.

All the evidence seems to be in. Yet the verdict of the public seems not quite made up. It is clear that Mark Twain the writer of romance is gaining upon Mark Twain the humorist. The inexhaustible American appetite for frontier types of humor seizes upon each new variety, crunches it with huge satisfaction, and then tosses it away. John Phoenix, Josh Billings, Jack Downing, Bill Arp, Petroleum V. Nasby, Artemus Ward, Bill Nye—these are already obsolescent names. If Clemens lacked something of Artemus Ward's whimsical delicacy and of Josh Billings's tested human wisdom, he surpassed all of his competitors in a certain rude, healthy masculinity, the humor of river and mining-camp and printing-office, where men speak without censorship. His country-men liked exaggeration, and he exaggerated; they liked irreverence, and he had turned iconoclast in *Innocents Abroad*. As a professional humorist, he has paid the obligatory tax for his extravagance, over-emphasis, and undisciplined taste, but such faults are swiftly forgotten when one turns

to Huckleberry Finn and the negro Jim and Pudd'n-head Wilson, when one feels Mark Twain's power in sheer description and episode, his magic in evoking landscape and atmosphere, his blazing scorn at injustice and cruelty, his contempt for quacks.

Bret Harte, another discoverer of the West, wears less well than Mark Twain as a personal figure, but has a sure place in the evolution of the American short story, and he did for the mining-camps of California what Clemens wrought for the Mississippi River: he became their profane poet. Yet he was never really of them. He was the clever outsider, with a prospector's eye, looking for literary material, and finding a whole rich mine of it—a bigger and richer, in fact, than he was really qualified to work. But he located a golden vein of it with an instinct that did credit to his dash of Hebrew blood. Born in Albany, a teacher's son, brought up on books and in many cities, Harte emigrated to California in 1854 at the age of sixteen. He became in turn a drug-clerk, teacher, type-setter, editor, and even Secretary of the California Mint — his nearest approach, apparently, to the actual work of the mines. In 1868, while editor of *The Overland Monthly*, he wrote the short

story which was destined to make him famous in the East and to release him from California forever. It was *The Luck of Roaring Camp*. He had been writing romantic sketches in prose and verse for years; he had steeped himself in Dickens, like everybody else in the eighteen-sixties; and now he saw his pay-gravel shining back into his own shining eyes. It was a pocket, perhaps, rather than a lead, but Bret Harte worked to the end of his career this material furnished by the camps, this method of the short story. He never returned to California after his joyous exit in 1871. For a few years he tried living in New York, but from 1878 until his death in 1902 Bret Harte lived in Europe, still turning out California stories for an English and American public which insisted upon that particular pattern.

That the pattern was arbitrary, theatrical, sentimental, somewhat meretricious in design, in a word insincere like its inventor, has been repeated at due intervals ever since 1868. The charge is true; yet it is far from the whole truth concerning Bret Harte's artistry. In mastery of the technique of the short story he is fairly comparable with Poe, though less original, for it was Poe who formulated, when Bret Harte was a child

of six, the well-known theory of the unity of effect of the brief tale. This unity Harte secured through a simplification, often an insulation, of his theme, the omission of quarreling details, an atmosphere none the less novel for its occasional theatricality, and characters cunningly modulated to the one note they were intended to strike. *Tennessee's Partner*, *The Outcast of Poker Flat*, and all the rest are triumphs of selective skill — as bright nuggets as ever glistened in the pan at the end of a hard day's labor. That they do not adequately represent the actual California of the fifties, as old Californians obstinately insist, is doubtless true, but it is beside the point. Here is no Tolstoi painting the soul of his race in a few pages: Harte is simply a disciple of Poe and Dickens, turning the Poe construction trick gracefully, with Dickensy characters and consistently romantic action.

The West has been rediscovered many a time since that decade which witnessed the first literary bonanza of Mark Twain and Bret Harte. It will continue to be discovered, in its fresh sources of appeal to the imagination, as long as Plains and Rockies and Coast endure, as long as there is any glow upon a distant horizon. It is

not places that lose romantic interest: the immemorial English counties and the Bay of Naples offer themselves freely to the artist, generation after generation. What is lost is the glamour of youth, the specific atmosphere of a given historical epoch. Colonel W. F. Cody ("Buffalo Bill") has typified to millions of American boys the great period of the Plains, with its Indian fighting, its slaughter of buffaloes, its robbing of stage-coaches, its superb riders etched against the sky. But the Wild West was retreating, even in the days of Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett. The West of the cow-boys, as Theodore Roosevelt and Owen Wister knew it and wrote of it in the eighties and nineties, has disappeared, though it lives on in fiction and on the screen.

Jack London, born in California in 1876, was forced to find his West in Alaska — and in alcohol. He was what he and his followers liked to call the virile or red-blooded type, responsive to the "Call of the Wild," "living life naked and tensely." In his talk Jack London was simple and boyish, with plenty of humor over his own literary and social foibles. His books are very uneven, but he wrote many a hard-muscled, clean-cut page. If the Bret Harte theory of the West was that each man is at

bottom a sentimentalist, Jack London's formula was that at bottom every man is a brute. Each theory gave provender enough for a short-story writer to carry on his back, but is hardly adequate, by itself, for a very long voyage over human life.

"Joaquin" (Cincinnatus Heine) Miller, who was born in 1841 and died in 1913, had even less of a formula for the West than Jack London. He was a word-painter of its landscapes, a rider over its surfaces. Cradled "in a covered wagon pointing West," mingling with wild frontier life from Alaska to Nicaragua, miner, Indian fighter, hermit, poseur in London and Washington, then hermit again in California, the author of *Songs of the Sierras* at least knew his material. Byron, whom he adored and imitated, could have invented nothing more romantic than Joaquin's life; but though Joaquin inherited Scotch intensity, he had nothing of the close mental grip of the true Scot and nothing of his humor. Vast stretches of his poetry are empty; some of it is grandiose, elemental, and yet somehow artificial, as even the Grand Canyon itself looks at certain times.

John Muir, another immigrant Scot who reached California in 1868, had far more stuff in him than Joaquin Miller. He had studied geology, botany,

and chemistry at the new University of Wisconsin, and then for years turned explorer of forests, peaks, and glaciers, not writing, at first, except in his *Journal*, but forever absorbing and worshipping sublimity and beauty with no thought of literary schemes. Yet his every-day talk about his favorite trees and glaciers had more of the glow of poetry in it than any talk I have ever heard from men of letters, and his books and *Journal* will long perpetuate this thrilling sense of personal contact with wild, clean, uplifted things — blossoms in giant tree-tops and snow-eddies blowing round the shoulders of Alaskan peaks. Here is a West as far above Jack London's and Frank Norris's as the snow-line is higher than the jungle.

The rediscovery of the South was not so much an exploration of fresh or forgotten geographical territory, as it was a new perception of the romantic human material offered by a peculiar civilization. Political and social causes had long kept the South in isolation. A few writers like Wirt, Kennedy, Longstreet, Simms, had described various aspects of its life with grace or vivacity, but the best picture of colonial Virginia had been drawn, after all, by Thackeray, who had merely read about it in books. Visitors like Fanny Kemble and

Frederick Law Olmsted sketched the South of the mid-nineteenth century more vividly than did the sons of the soil. There was no real literary public in the South for a native writer like Simms. He was as dependent upon New York and the Northern market as a Virginian tobacco-planter of 1740 had been upon London. But within a dozen years after the close of the War and culminating in the eighteen-nineties, there came a rich and varied harvest of Southern writing, notably in the field of fiction. The public for these stories, it is true, was still largely in the North and West, and it was the magazines and publishing-houses of New York and Boston that gave the Southern authors their chief stimulus and support. It was one of the happy proofs of the solidarity of the new nation.

The romance of the Spanish and French civilization of New Orleans, as revealed in Mr. Cable's fascinating *Old Creole Days*, was recognized, not as something merely provincial in its significance, but as contributing to the infinitely variegated pattern of our national life. Irwin Russell, Joel Chandler Harris, and Thomas Nelson Page portrayed in verse and prose the humorous, pathetic, unique traits of the Southern negro, a type hitherto

chiefly sketched in caricature or by strangers. Page, Hopkinson Smith, Grace King, and a score of other artists began to draw affectionate pictures of the vanished Southern mansion of plantation days, when all the women were beautiful and all the men were brave, when the very horses were more spirited and the dogs lazier and the honey-suckles sweeter and the moonlight more entrancing than today. Miss Murfree ("C. E. Craddock") charmed city-dwellers and country-folk alike by her novels of the Tennessee mountains. James Lane Allen painted lovingly the hemp-fields and pastures of Kentucky. American magazines of the decade from 1880 to 1890 show the complete triumph of dialect and local color, and this movement, so full of interest to students of the immense divergence of American types, owed much of its vitality to the talent of Southern writers.

But the impulse spread far beyond the South. Early in the seventies Edward Eggleston wrote *The Hoosier Schoolmaster* and *The Circuit Rider*, faithful and moving presentations of genuine pioneer types which were destined to pass with the frontier settlements. Soon James Whitcomb Riley was to sing of the next generation of Hoosiers, who frequented *The Old Swimmin' Hole* and re-

joined *When the Frost is on the Punkin*. It was the era of Denman Thompson's plays, *Joshua Whitcomb* and *The Old Homestead*. Both the homely and the exotic marched under this banner of local color: Hamlin Garland presented Iowa barnyards and cornfields, Helen Hunt Jackson dreamed the romance of the Mission Indian in *Ramona*, and Lafcadio Hearn, Irish and Greek by blood, resident of New Orleans and not yet an adopted citizen of Japan, tantalized American readers with his *Chinese Ghosts* and *Chita*. A fascinating period it seems, as one looks back upon it, and it lasted until about the end of the century, when the suddenly discovered commercial value of the historical novel and the ensuing competition in best sellers misled many a fine artistic talent and coarsened the public taste. The New South then played the literary market as recklessly as the New West.

Let us glance back to "the abandoned farm of literature," as a witty New Yorker once characterized New England. The last quarter of the nineteenth century witnessed a decline in the direct influence of that province over the country as a whole. Its strength sapped by the emigration of its more vigorous sons, its typical institutions sagging under the weight of immense immigrations

from Europe, its political importance growing more and more negligible, that ancient promontory of ideas has continued to lose its relative literary significance. In one field of literature only has New England maintained its rank since the Civil War, and that is in the local short story. Here women have distinguished themselves beyond the proved capacity of New England men. Mrs. Stowe and Rose Terry Cooke, women of democratic humor, were the pioneers; then came Harriet Prescott Spofford and Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, women with nerves; and finally the three artists who have written, out of the material offered by a decadent New England, as perfect short stories as France or Russia can produce—Sarah Orne Jewett, Mary Wilkins Freeman, and Alice Brown. These gifted writers portrayed, with varying technique and with singular differences in their instinctive choice of material, the dominant qualities of an isolated, in-bred race, still proud in its decline; still inquisitive and acquisitive, versatile yet stubborn, with thrift passing over into avarice, and mental power degenerating into smartness; cold and hard under long repression of emotion, yet capable of passion and fanaticism; at worst, a mere trader, a crank, a grim recluse; at best, en-

dowed with an austere physical and moral beauty. Miss Jewett preferred to touch graciously the sunnier slopes of this provincial temperament, to linger in its ancient dignities and serenities. Miss Brown has shown the pathos of its thwarted desires, its hunger for a beauty and a happiness denied. Mary Wilkins Freeman revealed its fundamental tragedies of will.

Two of the best known writers of New England fiction in this period were not natives of the soil, though they surpassed most native New Englanders in their understanding of the type. They were William Dean Howells and Henry James. Mr. Howells, who, in his own words, "can reasonably suppose that it is because of the mixture of Welsh, German, and Irish in me that I feel myself so typically American," came to "the Holy Land at Boston" as a "passionate pilgrim from the West." *A Boy's Town*, *My Literary Passions*, and *Years of my Youth* make clear the image of the young poet-journalist who returned from his four years in Venice and became assistant editor of *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1866. In 1871 he succeeded Fields in the editorship, but it was not until after his resignation in 1881 that he could put his full strength into those realistic novels of contempor-

ary New England which established his fame as a writer. *A Modern Instance* and *The Rise of Silas Lapham* are perhaps the finest stories of this group; and the latter novel may prove to be Mr. Howells's chief "visiting-card to posterity." We cannot here follow him to New York and to a new phase of novel writing, begun with *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, nor can we discuss the now antiquated debate upon realism which was waged in the eighteen-eighties over the books of Howells and James. We must content ourselves with saying that a knowledge of Mr. Howells's work is essential to the student of the American provincial novel, as it is also to the student of our more generalized types of story-writing, and that he has never in his long career written an insincere, a slovenly, or an infelicitous page. *My Literary Friends and Acquaintance* gives the most charming picture ever drawn of the elder Cambridge, Concord, and Boston men who ruled over our literature when young Howells came out of the West, and *My Mark Twain* is his memorable portrait of another type of sovereign, perhaps the dynasty that will rule the future.

Although Henry James, like Mr. Howells, wrote at one time acute studies of New England char-

acter, he was never, in his relations to that section, or, for that matter, to any locality save possibly London, anything more than a "visiting mind." His grandfather was an Irish merchant in Albany. His father, Henry James, was a philosopher and wit, a man of comfortable fortune, who lived at times in Newport, Concord, and Boston, but who was residing in New York when his son Henry was born in 1843. No child was ever made the subject of a more complete theory of deracination. Transplanted from city to city, from country to country, without a family or a voting-place, without college or church or creed or profession or responsibility of any kind save to his own exigent ideals of truth and beauty, Henry James came to be the very pattern of a cosmopolitan. Avoiding his native country for nearly thirty years and then returning for a few months to write some intricate pages about that *American Scene* which he understood far less truly than the average immigrant, he died in 1916 in London, having just renounced his American citizenship and become a British subject in order to show his sympathy with the Empire, then at war. It was the sole evidence of political emotion in a lifetime of seventy-three years.

American writing men are justly proud, nevertheless, of this expatriated craftsman. The American is inclined to admire good workmanship of any kind, as far as he can understand the mechanism of it. The task of really understanding Henry James has been left chiefly to clever women and to a few critics, but ever since *A Passionate Pilgrim* and *Roderick Hudson* appeared in 1875, it has been recognized that here was a master, in his own fashion. What that fashion is may now be known by anyone who will take the pains to read the author's prefaces to the New York edition of his revised works. Never, not even in the Paris which James loved, has an artist put his intentions and his self-criticism more definitively upon paper. The secret of Henry James is told plainly enough here: a specially equipped intelligence, a freedom from normal responsibilities, a consuming desire to create beautiful things, and, as life unfolded its complexities and *nuances* before his vision, an increasing passion to seek the beauty which lies entangled and betrayed, a beauty often adumbrated rather than made plastic, stories that must be hinted at rather than told, raptures that exist for the initiated only. The much discussed early and middle and later man-

ners of James are only various campaigns of this one questing spirit, changing his procedure as the elusive object of his search hid itself by this or that device of protective coloration or swift escape. It is as if a collector of rare butterflies had one method of capturing them in Madagascar, another for the Orinoco, and still another for Japan—though Henry James found his Japan and Orinoco and Madagascar all in London town!

No one who ever had the pleasure of hearing him discourse about the art of fiction can forget the absolute seriousness of his professional devotion; it was as though a shy celebrant were to turn and explain, with mystical intensity and a mystic's involution and reversal of all the values of vulgar speech, the ceremonial of some strange, high altar. His own power as a creative artist was not always commensurate with his intellectual endowment or with his desire after beauty, and his frank contempt for the masses of men made it difficult for him to write English. He preferred, as did Browning, who would have liked to reach the masses, a dialect of his own, and he used it increasingly after he was fifty. It was a dialect capable of infinite gradations of tone, endless refinements of expression. In his threescore books there are

delicious poignant moments where the spirit of life itself flutters like a wild creature, half-caught, half-escaping. It is for the beauty and thrill of these moments that the pages of Henry James will continue to be cherished by a few thousand readers scattered throughout the Republic to which he was ever an alien.

No poet of the new era has won the national recognition enjoyed by the veterans. It will be recalled that Bryant survived until 1878, Longfellow and Emerson until 1882, Lowell until 1891, Whittier and Whitman until 1892, and Holmes until 1894. Compared with these men the younger writers of verse seemed overmatched. The *National Ode* for the Centennial celebration in 1876 was intrusted to Bayard Taylor, a hearty person, author of capital books of travel, plentiful verse, and a skilful translation of *Faust*. But an adequate *National Ode* was not in him. Sidney Lanier, who was writing in that year his *Psalm of the West* and was soon to compose *The Marshes of Glynn*, had far more of the divine fire. He was a bookish Georgia youth who had served with the Confederate army, and afterward, with broken health and in dire poverty, gave his brief life to music and poetry. He had rich capacities for

both arts, but suffered in both from the lack of discipline and from an impetuous, restless imagination which drove him on to over-ambitious designs. Whatever the flaws in his affluent verse, it has grown constantly in popular favor, and he is, after Poe, the best known poet of the South. The late Edmund Clarence Stedman, whose *American Anthology* and critical articles upon American poets did so much to enhance the reputation of other men, was himself a maker of ringing lyrics and spirited narrative verse. His later days were given increasingly to criticism, and his *Life and Letters* is a storehouse of material bearing upon the growth of New York as a literary market-place during half a century. Richard Watson Gilder was another admirably fine figure, poet, editor, and leader of public opinion in many a noble cause. His *Letters*, likewise, give an intimate picture of literary New York from the seventies to the present. Through his editorship of *Scribner's Monthly* and *The Century Magazine* his sound influence made itself felt upon writers in every section. His own lyric vein had an opaline intensity of fire, but in spite of its glow his verse sometimes refused to sing.

The most perfect poetic craftsman of the period

—and, many think, our one faultless worker in verse—was Thomas Bailey Aldrich. His first volume of juvenile verse had appeared in 1855, the year of Whittier's *Barefoot Boy* and Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. By 1865 his poems were printed in the then well-known Blue and Gold edition, by Ticknor and Fields. In 1881 he succeeded Howells in the editorship of the *Atlantic*. Aldrich had a versatile talent that turned easily to adroit prose tales, but his heart was in the filing of his verses. Nothing so daintily perfect as his lighter pieces has been produced on this side of the Atlantic, and the deeper notes and occasional darker questionings of his later verse are embodied in lines of impeccable workmanship. Aloof from the social and political conflicts of his day, he gave himself to the fastidious creation of beautiful lines, believing that the beautiful line is the surest road to Arcady, and that Herrick, whom he idolized, had shown the way.

To some readers of these pages it may seem like profanation to pass over poets like Sill, George Woodberry, Edith Thomas, Richard Hovey, William Vaughn Moody, Madison Cawein—to mention but half a dozen distinguished names out of a larger company—and to suggest that James Whit-

comb Riley, more completely than any American poet since Longfellow, succeeded in expressing the actual poetic feelings of the men and women who composed his immense audience. Riley, like Aldrich, went to school to Herrick, Keats, Tennyson, and Longfellow, but when he began writing newspaper verse in his native Indiana he was guided by two impulses which gave individuality to his work. "I was always trying to write of the kind of people I knew, and especially to write verse that I could read just as if it were spoken for the first time." The first impulse kept him close to the wholesome Hoosier soil. The second is an anticipation of Robert Frost's theory of speech tones as the basis of verse, as well as a revival of the bardic practice of reciting one's own poems. For Riley had much of the actor and platform-artist in him, and comprehended that poetry might be made again a spoken art, directed to the ear rather than to the eye. His vogue, which at his death in 1915 far surpassed that of any living American poet, is inexplicable to those persons only who forget the sentimental traditions of our American literature and its frank appeal to the emotions of juvenility, actual and recollected. Riley's best "holt" as a poet was his memory of

his own boyhood and his perception that the child-mind lingers in every adult reader. Genius has often been called the gift of prolonged adolescence, and in this sense, surely, there was genius in the warm and gentle heart of this fortunate provincial who held that "old Indianapolis" was "high Heaven's sole and only under-study." No one has ever had the audacity to say that of New York.

We have had American drama for one hundred and fifty years,¹ but much of it, like our popular fiction and poetry, has been subliterary, more interesting to the student of social life and national character than to literary criticism in the narrow sense of that term. Few of our best known literary men have written for the stage. The public has preferred melodrama to poetic tragedy, although perhaps the greatest successes have been scored by plays which are comedies of manners rather than melodrama, and character studies of various American types, built up around the known capabilities of a particular actor. The twentieth century has witnessed a marked activity in play-writing, in the technical study of the drama,

¹ *Representative American Plays*, edited by Arthur Hobson Quinn, N. Y., 1917.

and in experiment with dramatic production, particularly with motion pictures and the out-of-doors pageant. At no time since *The Prince of Parthia* was first acted in Philadelphia in 1767 has such a large percentage of Americans been artistically and commercially interested in the drama, but as to the literary results of the new movement it is too soon to speak.

Nor 'is it possible to forecast the effect of a still more striking movement of contemporary taste, the revival of interest in poetry and the experimentation with new poetical forms. Such revival and experiment have often, in the past, been the preludes of great epochs of poetical production. Living Americans have certainly never seen such a widespread demand for contemporary verse, such technical curiosity as to the possible forms of poetry, or such variety of bold innovation. Imagism itself is hardly as novel as its contemporary advocates appear to maintain, and free verse goes back far in our English speech and song. But the new generation believes that it has made a discovery in reverting to sensations rather than thought, to the naïve reproduction of retinal and muscular impressions, as if this were the end of the matter.

The self-conscious, self-defending side of the new poetic impulse may soon pass, as it did in the case of Wordsworth and of Victor Hugo. Whatever happens, we have already had fresh and exquisite revelations of natural beauty, and, in volumes like *North of Boston* and *A Spoon River Anthology*, judgments of life that run very deep.

American fiction seems just now, on the contrary, to be marking time and not to be getting noticeably forward. Few names unknown ten years ago have won wide recognition in the domain of the novel. The short story has made little technical advance since the first successes of "O. Henry," though the talent of many observers has dealt with new material offered by the racial characteristics of European immigrants and by new phases of commerce and industry. The enormous commercial demand of the five-cent weeklies for short stories of a few easily recognized patterns has resulted too often in a substitution of stencil-plate generalized types instead of delicately and powerfully imagined individual characters. Short stories have been assembled, like Ford cars, with amazing mechanical expertness, but with little artistic advance in design. The same temporary arrest of progress has

been noted in France and England, however, where different causes have been at work. No one can tell, in truth, what makes some plants in the literary garden wither at the same moment that others are outgrowing their borders.

There is one plant in our own garden, however, whose flourishing state will be denied by nobody—namely, that kind of nature-writing identified with Thoreau and practised by Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Starr King, John Burroughs, John Muir, Clarence King, Bradford Torrey, Theodore Roosevelt, William J. Long, Thompson-Seton, Stewart Edward White, and many others. Their books represent, Professor Canby¹ believes, the adventures of the American subconsciousness, the promptings of forgotten memories, a racial tradition of contact with the wilderness, and hence one of the most genuinely American traits of our literature.

Other forms of essay writing, surely, have seemed in our own generation less distinctive of our peculiar quality. While admirable biographical and critical studies appear from time to time, and here and there a whimsical or trenchant discursive essay like those of Miss Repplier or Dr.

¹ "Back to Nature," by H. S. Canby, *Yale Review*, July, 1917.

Crothers, no one would claim that we approach France or even England in the field of criticism, literary history, memoirs, the bookish essay, and biography. We may have race-memories of a pine-tree which help us to write vigorously and poetically about it, but we write less vitally as soon as we enter the library door. A Frenchman does not, for he is better trained to perceive the continuity and integrity of race-consciousness, in the whole field of its manifestation. He does not feel, as many Americans do, that they are turning their back on life when they turn to books.

Perhaps the truth is that although we are a reading people we are not yet a book-loving people. The American newspaper and magazine have been successful in making their readers fancy that newspaper and magazine are an equivalent for books. Popular orators and popular preachers confirm this impression, and colleges and universities have often emphasized a vocational choice of books—in other words, books that are not books at all, but treatises. It is not, of course, that American journalism, whether of the daily or monthly sort, has consciously set itself to supplant the habit of book-reading. A thousand social and economic factors enter into such a problem. But

few observers will question the assertion that the influence of the American magazine, ever since its great period of national literary service in the eighties and nineties, has been more marked in the field of conduct and of artistic taste than in the stimulation of a critical literary judgment. An American schoolhouse of today owes its improvement in appearance over the schoolhouse of fifty years ago largely to the popular diffusion, through the illustrated magazines, of better standards of artistic taste. But whether the judgment of school-teachers and school-children upon a piece of literature is any better than it was in the red schoolhouse of fifty years ago is a disputable question.

But we must stop guessing, or we shall never have done. The fundamental problem of our literature, as this book has attempted to trace it, has been to obtain from a mixed population dwelling in sections as widely separated as the peoples of Northern and Southern Europe, an integral intellectual and spiritual activity which could express, in obedience to the laws of beauty and truth, the emotions stimulated by our national life. It has been assumed in the preceding chapters that

American literature is something different from English literature written in America. Canadian and Australian literatures have indigenous qualities of their own, but typically they belong to the colonial literature of Great Britain. This can scarcely be said of the writings of Franklin and Jefferson, and it certainly cannot be said of the writings of Cooper, Hawthorne, Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, Lowell, Lincoln, Mark Twain, and Mr. Howells. In the pages of these men and of hundreds of others less distinguished, there is a revelation of a new national type. That the full energies of this nation have been back of our books, giving them a range and vitality and unity commensurate with the national existence, no one would claim. There are other spheres of effort in which American character has been more adequately expressed than in words. Nevertheless the books are here, in spite of every defect in national discipline, every flaw in national character; and they deserve the closest attention from all those who are trying to understand the American mind.

If the effort toward an expression of a peculiarly complex national experience has been the problem of our literary past, the literary problem

of the future is the expression of the adjustment of American ideals to the standards of civilization. "Patriotism," said the martyred Edith Cavell just before her death, "is not enough." Nationality and the instincts of national separatism now seem essential to the preservation of the political units of the world-state, precisely as a healthy individualism must be the basis of all enduring social fellowship. Yet it is clear that civilization is a larger, more ultimate term than nationality. Chauvinism is nowhere more repellent than in the things of the mind. It is difficult for some Americans to think internationally even in political affairs—to construe our national policy and duty in terms of obligation to civilization. Nevertheless the task must be faced, and we are slowly realizing it.

In the field of literature, likewise, Americanism is not a final word either of blame or praise. It is a word of useful characterization. Only American books, and not books written in English in America, can adequately represent our national contribution to the world's thinking and feeling. So argued Emerson and Whitman, long ago. But the younger of these two poets came to realize in his old age that the New World and the Old World are fundamentally one. The literature of

the New World will inevitably have an accent of its own, but it must speak the mother-language of civilization, share in its culture, accept its discipline.

It has been said disparagingly of Longfellow and his friends: "The houses of the Brahmins had only eastern windows. The souls of the whole school lived in the old lands of culture, and they visited these lands as often as they could, and, returning, brought back whole libraries of books which they eagerly translated." But even if Longfellow and his friends had been nothing more than translators and diffusers of European culture, their task would have been justified. They kept the ideals of civilization from perishing in this new soil. Through those eastern windows came in, and still comes in, the sunlight to illumine the American spirit. To decry the literatures of the Orient and of Greece and Rome as something now outgrown by America, is simply to close the eastern windows, to narrow our conception of civilization to merely national and contemporaneous terms. It is as provincial to attempt this restriction in literature as it would be in world-politics. We must have all the windows open in our American writing, free access to ideas, knowledge of universal standards, perception of universal law.

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